THE Nation.

FALL BOOKS

Marilynne Robinson on William James

WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ ON SAUL BELLOW

SAMUEL ZIPP ON ED KOCH

JANA PRIKRYL ON SARAH BERNHARDT

AARON THIER ON JULIA HOLMES

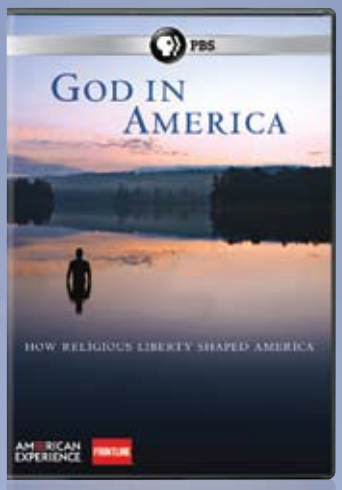
FRANCES RICHARD ON PHOTOGRAPHY AND SUFFERING

DECEMBER 13, 2010
TheNation.com

TRANSLATIONS AND A POEM BY ANNE CARSON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOW ON DVD



The 400-year struggle for the soul of the nation

"…vivid reenactments…, riveting archival footage, and fascinating interviews with theologians and religious experts… the complex relationship between democracy and faith is a story line that never gets old."

— *Elle Magazine*

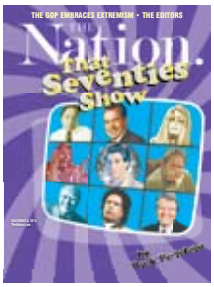
Available in stores now or buy online at shopPBS.org

6 HOURS ON 3 DISCS
*
$34.99 SRP
*
INCLUDES BONUS BEHIND THE SCENES VIDEOS

From the producers of
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE FRONTLINE

Artwork © 2010 PBS Distribution. All rights reserved.
1109070

Letters



Saturday Night Peever

Philadelphia

Rick Perlstein's "That Seventies Show" [Nov. 8], a useful synthesis of recent books about the 1970s, demonstrates that we are just beginning to understand one of the most contentious and confounding eras of the twentieth century. But Perlstein's selection of titles neglects the activity of social movements. Considerations of the shifting politics and economics of that era are incomplete without also examining the many ways that people tried to change society from below and to the left.

The success of the right in this period—in terms of neoconservative cultural politics and neoliberal political economics—was as much a response to the dramatic left-wing social movements of the postwar period. Seen from the perspective of women; lesbian, gay and transgendered people; Puerto Rican independence activists; and others, the 1970s was one of the most dynamic periods of recent American history. Indeed, it was the advancements of these movements that Nixon, Reagan and company openly sought to undermine.

Our understanding of the recent past will remain two-dimensional if we fail to grasp the radical challenges that continued to percolate after the '60s. Our attempts to escape the cruel grip of the far right will continue to fall short if we overlook the humane alternatives that social movements always seek to provide.

Dan Berger, *editor*
The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism

I Can See for Myles…

Leakey, Texas

Regarding Peter Daniels's letter of November 8, nominating Myles Horton to your list of greatest progressives: I think a lot of progressives have never heard of Myles Horton. He lived under the radar as an adult educator at Highlander Folk School, an idyllic setting on the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. There he trained people in democratic leadership for social change from 1932 until 1961, when the State of Tennessee closed the school, widely believed to be a "communist training school," for its work with the labor and civil rights movements. But a school is an idea, not a place, he said, and HFS became Highlander Center, in another idyllic setting, near Knoxville; it's still working to empower the disempowered. Myles's dream, of change coming from the bottom up instead of top down, lives on.

Michele Marlowe

Beauty and the Beast

St. Joseph, Mich.

In "Looking Back, Moving Forward" [Nov. 8] Gara LaMarche and Deepak Bhargava make an infuriating comparison between Glenn Beck and Rachel Maddow. In describing how the polarized media and 24/7 cable television news trivialize important issues and prevent balance and meaningful dialogue, they lump Maddow in with Beck, a classic example of the false balance mainstream media often strive for to avoid admitting that both sides do not deserve equal blame or credit.

Beck is a demagogue and verbal bomb thrower whose questionable ethics include shilling for gold coins in commercials on his show. Maddow always strives to have civil discourse and to provide analysis, context and perspective while going out of her way to give the people she criticizes a chance to respond without trying to shout them down. Comparing the two is not only unfair but intellectually lazy.

Evan Goodenow

Breathless

Henderson, Ky.

Godard can be accused of many things, but not thinking is not one of them. If you're looking for linear narrative, stay away from Jean-Luc, but for a master whose thought process is fused with cinema technique, Godard's your man [Stuart Klawans, "The Magic Mountain," Nov. 8].

Robert Howard

letters@thenation.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Nation.
since 1865

The Politics of Pain

Thanksgiving may be a time to give thanks for our blessings, but in Washington the resurgent Republicans are jettisoning compassion. They have the same old leaders—and their passion hasn't changed. It isn't about offering a hand to the afflicted; it's about handouts to the connected.

Republicans have continued their strategy of obstruction in the lame-duck session by opposing the New Start treaty, opposing repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," opposing immigration reform and even opposing appropriations for the current year. Their passion is focused on one goal: extending the Bush tax cuts for those earning more than $250,000 a year. Forget about deficit reduction. According to the GOP, tax cuts for the wealthy—which will cost an estimated $700 billion over the next decade—need not be balanced by spending cuts.

EDITORIAL

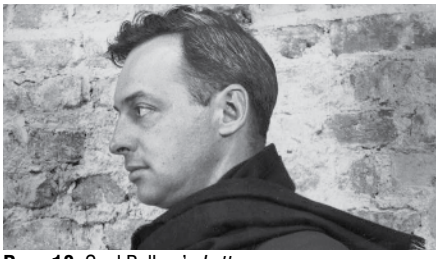
At the same time, the GOP is willing to filibuster to block extending benefits to the long-term unemployed—the families of some 2 million workers—which expire at the end of November. The Republicans won't sign on, they say, unless there are domestic spending cuts to offset the benefits. So much for holiday cheer.

The consequences of inaction are grim. According to the Center for American Progress, unemployment insurance lifted 3.3 million people, including a million children, out of poverty in 2009. Dean Baker of the Center for Economic and Policy Research points out that "all the projections show the unemployment rate will be much higher over the next year than it was when we originally extended benefits." If benefits aren't extended, millions will go hungry. According to a new report from the Agriculture Department, in 2009 about 50 million people, including 17 million children, lived in food-insecure households.

Why do Republicans go to the wall for the wealthy while abandoning those who have lost their jobs because of Wall Street's recklessness? This isn't hard to figure out. Secret donors spent more than $138 million on the midterms, with 80 percent of the money going to Republicans. NBC News reports that a good proportion of the money raised by Karl Rove's Crossroads GPS came from wealthy hedge-funders furious at Democratic efforts to repeal the outrageous "carried interest" loophole, which allows billionaires to pay taxes at a lower rate than their chauffeurs.

The Chamber of Commerce spent nearly $33 million in secret donations in this year's elections, virtually all of it for Republican candidates. So it shouldn't be surprising that the priorities announced by GOP Congressional leaders Mitch McConnell and John Boehner reflect those of the Chamber: lowering taxes on the wealthy and corporations, repealing healthcare and rolling back Wall Street reform. These priorities are totally divorced from those of the American people, who are overwhelmingly concerned about jobs and the economy. In a new survey by the National Employment Law Project and Half in Ten, 67 percent of voters believe Congress should continue to provide unemployment benefits until the jobless rate comes down substantially.

"Where are the jobs?" That was House Speaker-presumptive Boehner's mantra during the election campaign; but jobs are AWOL in the Republican program. It's turning out that the Republicans have plenty of compassion, but it's not for ordinary citizens, and certainly not for the unemployed. It's for the wealthiest among us—the hedge-funders, the bankers and those in the corporate sector, who so lavishly fund the GOP campaigns. And the only jobs they care about are their own.



Page 18: Saul Bellow's *Letters*

Inside

2 Letters

Editorials & Comment

3 The Politics of Pain

4 Time for a Wealth Tax
LEON FRIEDMAN

5 Noted

8 Ten Things
What You Should Know About Slow

Columns

6 Deadline Poet
The Voice of Experience
CALVIN TRILLIN

9 Subject to Debate
On Condoms, Hope From the Pope
KATHA POLLITT

10 Sister Citizen
The Misunderestimation of Sarah Palin
MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY

Books & the Arts

11 Richardson, ed.: The Heart of William James
MARILYNNE ROBINSON

16 Holmes: Meeks
AARON THIER

18 Bellow: Letters
WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ

26 Gottlieb: Sarah: The Life of Sarah Bernhardt
Inglis: A Short History of Celebrity
JANA PRIKRYL

30 [3 fragments of Mimnermos] (POEMS)
TRANSLATED BY ANNE CARSON

31 Linfield: The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence
FRANCES RICHARD

39 Soffer: Ed Koch and the Rebuilding of New York City
Flood: The Fires: How a Computer Formula, Big Ideas, and the Best of Intentions Burned Down New York City—and Determined the Future of Cities
SAMUEL ZIPP

42 Epitaph for Ben Sonnenberg (POEM)
ANNE CARSON

COVER DESIGN BY DOUG CHAYKA

VOLUME 291, NUMBER 24, DECEMBER 13, 2010
PRINTED NOVEMBER 23

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Nation.

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Katrina vanden Heuvel

PRESIDENT: Teresa Stack

MANAGING EDITOR: Roane Carey
LITERARY EDITOR: John Palattella
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Betsy Reed
SENIOR EDITORS: Richard Lingeman (*on leave*), Richard Kim
WEB EDITOR: Emily Douglas
COPY CHIEF: Judith Long
ASSOCIATE LITERARY EDITOR: Miriam Markowitz
COPY EDITOR: Mark Sorkin
ASSISTANT COPY EDITOR: Dave Baker
COPY ASSOCIATE: Lisa Vandepaer
WEB EDITORIAL PRODUCER: Francis Reynolds
RESEARCH DIRECTOR/ASSISTANT EDITOR: Kate Murphy
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR: Peggy Suttle
INTERNS: Devon Bancroft, Joanna Chiu, Hayes Clark, Ryan Devereaux, Braden Goyette, Neima Jahromi, Jennifer O'Mahony, Laurie Rojas, Laura Stampler (*Washington*), Michael C. Tracey

WASHINGTON: EDITOR: Christopher Hayes; **CORRESPONDENT:** John Nichols

NATIONAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT: William Greider

COLUMNISTS: Eric Alterman, Alexander Cockburn, Melissa Harris-Perry, Naomi Klein, Katha Pollitt, Patricia J. Williams, Gary Younge

DEPARTMENTS: *Architecture*, Jane Holtz Kay; *Art*, Barry Schwabsky; *Corporations*, Robert Sherrill; *Defense*, Michael T. Klare; *Environment*, Mark Hertsgaard; *Films*, Stuart Klawans; *Legal Affairs*, David Cole; *National Security*, Jeremy Scahill; *Net Movement*, Ari Melber; *Peace and Disarmament*, Jonathan Schell; *Poetry*, Peter Gizzi; *Sex*, JoAnn Wypijewski; *Sports*, Dave Zirin; *United Nations*, Barbara Crossette; *Deadline Poet*, Calvin Trillin

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Kai Bird, Robert L. Borosage, Stephen F. Cohen, Marc Cooper, Arthur C. Danto, Mike Davis, Slavenka Drakulic, Robert Dreyfuss, Susan Faludi, Thomas Ferguson, Doug Henwood, Max Holland, Michael Moore, Christian Parenti, Richard Pollak, Joel Rogers, Karen Rothmyer, Robert Scheer, Herman Schwartz, Bruce Shapiro, Edward Sorel, Gore Vidal, Jon Wiener, Amy Wilentz, Art Winslow

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Ari Berman, William Deresiewicz, Liza Featherstone, Dana Goldstein, Bob Moser, Eyal Press, Scott Sherman

BUREAUS: *London*, Maria Margaronis, D.D. Guttenplan; *Southern Africa*, Mark Gevisser

EDITORIAL BOARD: Deepak Bhargava, Norman Birnbaum, Barbara Ehrenreich, Richard Falk, Frances FitzGerald, Eric Foner, Philip Green, Lani Guinier, Tom Hayden, Tony Kushner, Elinor Langer, Deborah W. Meier, Toni Morrison, Walter Mosley, Victor Navasky, Pedro Antonio Noguera, Richard Parker, Michael Pertschuk, Elizabeth Pochoda, Marcus G. Raskin, Kristina Rizga, Andrea Batista Schlesinger, David Weir, Roger Wilkins

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, SPECIAL PROJECTS/WEBSITE: Peter Rothberg
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, DEVELOPMENT/ASSOCIATES: Peggy Randall
VICE PRESIDENT, ADVERTISING: Ellen Bollinger
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Amanda Hale
VICE PRESIDENT, CIRCULATION: Arthur Stupar
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Michelle O'Keefe
CIRCULATION FULFILLMENT MANAGER: Katelyn Belyus
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: Omar Rubio
PRODUCER/WEB COPY EDITOR: Sandy McCroskey
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Timothy Don
NATION ASSOCIATES DIRECTOR: Joliange Wright
NATION ASSOCIATES ASSISTANT: Loren Lynch
PUBLICITY AND SYNDICATION DIRECTOR: Ben Wyskida
EDUCATION/COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR: Habiba Alcindor
DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL PRODUCTS: Kellye Rogers
WEB PRODUCER: Joshua Leeman
TECHNOLOGY MANAGER: Jason Brown
CONTROLLER: Mary van Valkenburg
ASSISTANT TO VICTOR NAVASKY: Mary Taylor Schilling
DATA ENTRY/MAIL COORDINATOR: John Holtz
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT: Kathleen Thomas
RECEPTIONIST/BUSINESS ASSISTANT: Sarah Arnold
ADVERTISING ASSISTANT: Kit Gross
ACADEMIC LIAISON: Charles Bittner

PUBLISHER EMERITUS: Victor Navasky

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: E-mail to letters@thenation.com (300-word limit). Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

SUBMISSIONS: Queries only, no manuscripts. Go to www.thenation.com and click on "about," then "submissions" for a query form. Queries may be mailed to The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. SASE for poems.

INTERNET: Selections from the current issue become available Thursday night at www.thenation.com.

♻ Printed on 100% recycled 40% post-consumer acid- and chlorine-free paper, in the USA.

Time for a Wealth Tax

COMMENT

The draft proposal by the co-chairs of President Obama's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform would cut federal deficits by reducing cost-of-living increases on Social Security benefits and raising the retirement age, as well as limiting mortgage-interest and other deductions that middle-class taxpayers rely on. At the same time, it would reduce tax rates on the top income group by 12 percent. *New York Times* columnist and Nobel Prize–winning economist Paul Krugman sums up the proposal as follows: "Same old, same old—tax cuts for the rich and erosion of the social safety net." An alternate plan, put forth by a group headed by Alice Rivlin and former Senator Pete Domenici, would also reduce tax rates on the rich as well as on corporations, while eliminating many deductions. To raise additional revenue, it relies heavily on a permanent 6.5 percent national sales tax, which is notoriously regressive and would fall most heavily on the lowest earners.

Is it really necessary that the poorest among us give up benefits or pay more sales taxes to reduce the deficit, rather than have the richest make a fair contribution? How can we significantly reduce the current deficit of more than $1.3 trillion and similar deficits in the future without cannibalizing Social Security, Medicare and other mandates? One obvious place to look is at the wealth of the top 1 to 5 percent of the population. Every study of inequality in this country has noted the growing wealth of those at the top, largely the result of the Reagan tax cuts of the 1980s and the Bush tax cuts of 2001 and '03. The top 1 percent of the population now own 35 percent of the total wealth of the nation (they owned 20.5 percent in 1979). The next 4 percent own 27 percent of the total wealth. So together, the top 5 percent own 62 percent of the total wealth of the country.

What does this mean in actual numbers? As of March 31, the total net worth of all American households was $54.6 trillion, according to studies made by the Federal Reserve Board. The top 1 percent consists of about 3 million households, each with a net worth of at least $8.3 million. The total net worth of that group is 35 percent of $54.6 trillion, or $19.1 trillion.

Wouldn't that amount be an appropriate target for a federal tax? Imposing a tax based on wealth rather than income is not a new idea. The federal government and most state governments impose an estate tax based on the total net worth of the individual at the time of death (the federal estate tax, which lapsed in 2010, may be reimposed in some form next year). And most local government units have a tax that measures the value of each person's real property, which is levied on an annual basis, but such taxes do not touch personal property.

Many European countries have a wealth tax—that is, a tax on the total net worth of each household, which must be paid not just at the time of death but annually. It is like an estate tax, since it requires each household to measure its total net worth and to pay a tax based on that net worth. If a Norwegian citizen has a net worth of $5 million, he must pay, in addition to any income tax, 1 percent of $5 million, or $50,000, to the government every

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Noted.

CHALMERS JOHNSON, 1931–2010: A Depression boy; a lieutenant junior grade assigned to a Navy "rust bucket" without a name at the end of the Korean War; a student of the radicalization of Chinese peasants under the Japanese "loot-all, kill-all, burn-all" campaigns of the late 1930s; a staunch anticommunist nonetheless capable, in one of his many books, of slipping, in a deeply empathic way, into the mindset of a World War II Japanese communist spy; a supporter of the US war in Vietnam and the rescuer of the State Department China hand **John Service** after anticommunist witch hunts had destroyed his livelihood; a valued consultant to the CIA and an eminent scholar of Japanese state capitalism. When the cold war ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the United States refused to demobilize and come in from the cold, he did.

He could have lived comfortably with his eminence, but in the face of a new reality, he refused. His was a remarkable tale. In 1995 he visited the Japanese island of Okinawa for the first time and was shocked by the thirty-odd US bases there ("the American Raj," he called it), and from that moment he turned his back on our "unacknowledged empire." He recanted former positions—"In retrospect, I wish I had stood with the [Vietnam] antiwar protest movement. For all its naïveté and unruliness, it was right and American policy wrong"—and labeled himself sardonically a "spear-carrier for empire." He turned his razor-sharp mind and accumulated experience against US militarism while mapping out our global "empire of bases," a situation strangely unnoticed by Americans but painfully obvious to others.

He had the creds to do so. The title of his first book of this era, *Blowback*, published in 2000, picked up a CIA term, "tradecraft" ("the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people"), and put it into our vocabulary. In that book, he all but predicted a 9/11-like fate for us ("acts committed in service to an empire but never acknowledged as such have a tendency to haunt the future") and, like a classic Cassandra, found his book largely ignored until events drove it to prominence and bestsellerdom. From then on, he never stopped warning the rest of us that if we didn't choose to dismantle our empire ourselves, far worse would be in store for us.

His was an all-American odyssey, and in his final decades he was a man on a mission. A sparrow of a figure, ever more crippled in his losing battle with rheumatoid arthritis, he was in every other way a giant. To those who knew him, it seemed a reasonable bet that he would beat death at its own game.

No such luck. He died on November 20. This country, lost at sea and incapable of downsizing its global mission, still needs him. If only we could bring him back for one more round. TOM ENGELHARDT

GOP BLOCKS FAIR PAY: Women fell two votes short on November 17 in their efforts to get paid the same as men for the same work. Senate Republicans, deciding that equal pay for women should not even be considered, blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act from moving to the floor. The House had passed the bill in January 2009, and President Obama had pledged to sign it. The cloture vote was fifty-eight "yes," forty-one "no," with Alaska Republican **Lisa Murkowski** not voting. All other Republicans voted no, along with **Ben Nelson** of Nebraska, the lone dissenting Democrat.

The measure would have updated the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by closing loopholes, strengthening incentives to prevent pay discrimination and prohibiting retaliation against workers who inquire about employers' wage practices or disclose their own wages, according to the **American Association of University Women** (AAUW), which has been pushing for its passage for ten years. It also would have required employers to show that wage gaps are a result of factors other than gender, to collect better data on wages and develop training for women on salary negotiations.

The vote was decried by AAUW, the ACLU, the National Women's Law Center and other civic and labor organizations that had been pushing for passage. "This was a missed opportunity to make history and jump-start real economic change for American women and their families," said AAUW executive director **Linda Hallman**. "While the Senate's action is difficult to comprehend given the stark reality that most families depend on the paychecks of women, our effort to close the pay gap is far from over."

Opponents, including Republicans and the Chamber of Commerce, have said that they're concerned the bill would lead to more employees filing suits, which would be costly for employers to fight. That argument has been used in every civil rights issue regarding discrimination, said **Deborah Vagins**, legislative counsel to the ACLU. "There has been other civil rights legislation to fight discrimination that business has supported. This bill really has nothing for businesses to worry about, especially if they're already complying with the Equal Pay Act," Vagins said. Paycheck Fairness, she explained, is for women working for employers who aren't in compliance.

According to the AAUW, on average, women still make only seventy-seven cents for every dollar men earn. By some estimates, the group says, a woman could lose $500,000 to $1 million over a forty-year career. DENISE DI STEPHAN

KUDOS TO CREATIVE CITIZENS: **Planned Parenthood** president **Cecile Richards** and author, educator and environmentalist **Bill McKibben** have been chosen to receive the annual $100,000 **Puffin/Nation Prize for Creative Citizenship**. This is the first year the prize has been awarded to two winners. Richards and McKibben will be honored on December 6 at **The Nation Institute**'s Annual Dinner Gala in New York City.

The Puffin Foundation and The Nation Institute are co-sponsors of the award, which is given to individuals who have challenged the status quo through distinctive, courageous, imaginative and socially responsible works of significance.

Perry Rosenstein, president of The Puffin Foundation Ltd., said, "Bill McKibben and Cecile Richards are leaders, pure and simple. In thought and in action, their work—whether it's protecting our precious natural world or our precious right of self-determination—inspires and emboldens us. They are exemplary lifelong public citizens: creative and tough, dedicated and ardent."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

year. Our government could impose such a tax on an emergency basis, to be applied only during the immediate financial crisis, say for two or three years.

Of course, the new Congress is not likely to impose a wealth tax when there are already such loud objections—sure to get louder—to reimposing higher income tax rates on those making over $250,000. One of the objections to re-establishing those higher rates on the rich is based on the claim that many small businesses are individual proprietorships, which may make more than $250,000 a year, and that raising taxes on those businesses would limit their ability to hire more employees. But David Cay Johnston, along with other commentators, has demolished the idea that a significant number of small businesses would be affected this way. Only about 3 percent of them, mostly professional organizations like law firms, fall into the higher taxable category. There are more than 22 million sole proprietorships filing tax returns each year, and their average salary or income is below $100,000. On the other hand, there are only 3 million households in the top 1 percent. Asking that small group to pay only 1 percent of their considerable assets for a limited period would certainly not affect job creation.

There are many good reasons for imposing such a tax. First, the rich can afford it. Second, there are a lot of rich people whose wealth is partly the result of government largesse, like the Bush tax cuts, 30 percent of which went to the top 1 percent. Third, taxing the wealth of the very rich will reduce the massive deficits and thus obviate the need to cut vital government services, as well as Social Security and Medicare.

Suppose such a wealth tax were imposed on the top 1 percent of households. It would raise $191.1 billion each year (1 percent of $19.1 trillion), a significant attack on the deficit. If we extended the tax to the top 5 percent, we could raise $338.5 billion a year (1 percent of 62 percent of $54.6 trillion).

Many years ago, Donald Trump suggested a one-time wealth tax of 14.25 percent on all Americans worth more than $10 million to wipe out the entire federal debt at the time, amounting to $5.7 trillion. Today we would need $13.5 trillion—about 40 percent of the wealth of the top 5 percent—to do it, which is highly unlikely to happen. But if we had the courage to take such a step, we would eliminate $414 billion in annual interest payments on the national debt.

There is one potential problem: Article 1, Section 9 of the Constitution states, "No Capitation, or other direct Tax, shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census, or Enumeration herein before directed to be taken." That is, no direct tax on individuals can be made unless it is levied in proportion to the total population of each state. In 1895, in the infamous *Pollack* decision, the Supreme Court interpreted that provision as barring a federal income tax. It was only after the Sixteenth Amendment was ratified, in 1913, to amend the quoted provision that an income tax was reinstated.

However, constitutional scholars like Professor Bruce Ackerman of Yale Law School have studied the history and background of the provision and conclude that it should not be a bar to a wealth tax. They point out that the provision was imposed at the 1787 Constitutional Convention by the Southern states, which were worried that Congress would impose an individual property tax on the value of the slaves they owned. Subsequent decisions by the Court confirmed the wide latitude of Congress in getting around the Section 9 provision.

So what would a wealth tax mean? Because of the openness of our stock markets and the filings of the Securities and Exchange Commission, it's easy for *Forbes* to determine the wealth of the 400 richest Americans. Thus, we have no trouble determining who would be subject to the tax. If a very rich person had a net worth of $10 billion, he or she would have to pay 1 percent, or $100 million, each year to the government. In the face of the nation's stark financial problems, our richest Americans can afford this modest diminution of their wealth. And they certainly would have no right to complain, since it was previous government actions that enabled them to accumulate it. LEON FRIEDMAN

Leon Friedman is a professor of constitutional law at Hofstra Law School.

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

The Voice of Experience

"Bush writes that in the closing days of his time in the White House in early 2009, Cheney pressed his case that Libby should be pardoned, and was angry when Bush refused. 'I can't believe you're going to leave a soldier on the battlefield,' Cheney told Bush."
—Reuters

You never leave a man behind.
Though shells explode and smoke is thick,
You go back for that wounded grunt.
Or so says Five Deferments Dick.

You can't abandon even one.
Together patriots must stick.
A wounded soldier counts on that.
Or so says Five Deferments Dick.

A man must do what he must do.
He must be solid as a brick.
He shows that on the battlefield.
Or so says Five Deferments Dick.

@Nation.com

Join us at our new section **Lived History**, where we will celebrate the lives and achievements of important progressives (both famous and non-). Check now for tributes to our crossword puzzlemaster of sixty-two years, **Frank W. Lewis**.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They make a big difference.

Not a big pension.

The average pension of an AFSCME member is $19,000.

The next time you hear someone railing against excessive, bloated public pensions, you might want to know the facts: An AFSCME public service worker receives an average pension of $19,000 a year. That's right. $19,000. And the vast majority of our members pay into their pensions during their years of public service. Yet the right wing has been attacking public employee pensions as part of their campaign to slash vital public services. That's just plain wrong. And just plain false. So is calling public employees "overpaid." Recent research* has found that state and local employees make 11-to-12 percent less in salary than workers in the private sector, when education and experience are considered. It's time to stop scapegoating public employees. It's time to help our communities. It's time to stop the lies.

You can help STOP THE LIES Go to www.afscme.org/StopTheLies.

AFSCME®
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

Gerald W. McEntee
President

Lee A. Saunders
Secretary-Treasurer

** Sources: The Center for State and Local Government Excellence and the National Institute on Retirement Security.*

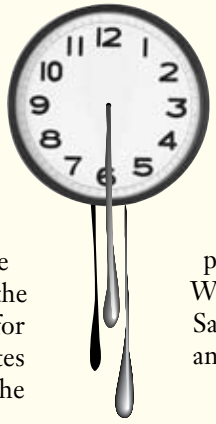
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ten Things.

Ten Things You Should Know About Slow

A century ago the Futurist movement glorified speed and the triumph of technology over nature. Since then, Futurism has become the one thing it despised most: an artifact from the past. Probably the best way to celebrate its centennial is to ride the pendulum in the opposite direction and go slow. Dian Duchin Reed is a writer and poet who loves to garden and always takes time to smell the roses, lilacs and jasmine. Although the holiday season is fast approaching, here are ten things she suggests you do to slow down in the present so you can enjoy it and savor future memories. Check out slowmovement.com.

1 Say no to fast food and join the Slow Food movement instead. Fast food cares nothing for the health of your body or the environment, and the taste doesn't begin to compare to home-cooked and comfort food. Try new cookbooks. For a good list see 101cookbooks.com/lists/heidis_cookbooks.html. Go to slowfood.com and join the movement.



2 Slow down to the speed limit when driving (see drive55.org). Driving at the speed limit saves gas, increases safety and can reduce adrenaline-fueled road rage. Everyone's cursed the driver who weaves through traffic at high speeds for the sake of arriving at a destination a few minutes sooner. Is a gain measured in minutes really worth the risk of a serious accident?

3 Slow down your conversation. Don't cut people off in your haste to get your two cents in. Listen—really listen—to what others are saying, instead of using the time to compose your rebuttal. Stop to think before saying (or posting or texting) something you may regret later.

4 Be slow to judge. There's no good reason others should think, act or dress just like you. Honor diversity. Read *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies* by Scott Page.

5 Tune in, not out. On the outside, it appears that the world holds 7 billion people of different beliefs, skin colors, religions and levels of education. Look inside, and discover that we're all the same species, all of us related, all of us in the same boat. Why persist in rocking it so vigorously? Reduce time spent on social networking sites and take more time tuning in to the real world around you. Go to wikihow.com/Quit-Facebook and check out tinyurl.com/2487hj4.

6 Not so fast—do you really need a new [fill in the blank]? There will always be something that's bigger, better or more fashionable than what you've got, but down that road lies the biggest garbage dump you can imagine. It's called the earth. Check out verdant.net and the Rev. Billy's Church of Life After Shopping at revbilly.com/about-us.

7 According to the American Heart Association, one out of every three adult Americans has high blood pressure (tinyurl.com/25damm3). Research indicates that time spent relaxing or meditating can reduce blood pressure. Wouldn't you rather meditate than medicate? As François de La Rochefoucauld said, "When we are unable to find tranquility within ourselves, it is useless to seek it elsewhere." Go to tinyurl.com/qbz3w for relaxation techniques. Go to hulu.com/channels/Health-and-Wellness for free yoga, meditation and workout videos.

8 One of the most delightful (and insightful) ways to slow down is to take the time to read poetry daily. "And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow," wrote William Butler Yeats in "The Lake Isle of Innisfree." Savor poems of all eras, categories and styles at poets.org and poetryfoundation.org.

9 Take time to consider the children. How does your next action affect the world they'll inherit? (Visit sevengenerationsahead.org.) It's easy to act out of habit or because everyone else is doing it. By taking the time to notice what you're actually doing, you'll be able to decide if you really want to be doing it at all. Join the slow parenting movement, and read Carl Honoré's book *Under Pressure: Rescuing Our Children From the Culture of Hyper-Parenting* (carlhonore.com/?page_id=5).

10 Don't rush through life. Be aware of moments you can picture yourself later reminiscing about fondly, and then realize that you're actually living them right now. What's the future got that the present doesn't, except more wrinkles and gray hair? Read Honoré's *In Praise of Slowness: Challenging the Cult of Speed*. Watch his video (tinyurl.com/2djj9kr).

CONCEIVED BY WALTER MOSLEY with research by Rae Gomes

"Ten Things" is a monthly feature. Readers who wish to propose ideas for it should e-mail NationTenThings@gmail.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Katha Pollitt

On Condoms, Hope From the Pope

Is the pope Catholic? The whole world broke out the champagne the weekend before Thanksgiving when the news came that Pope Benedict XVI had approved the use of condoms in certain circumstances to prevent the transmission of HIV. In *Light of the World*, a new collection of interviews with the German journalist Peter Seewald, the pope says:

> There may be a basis in the case of some individuals, as perhaps when a male prostitute uses a condom, where this can be a first step in the direction of a moralization, a first assumption of responsibility, on the way toward recovering an awareness that not everything is allowed and that one cannot do whatever one wants. But it is not really the way to deal with the evil of HIV infection. That can really lie only in a humanization of sexuality.

That's quite a turnaround from last year, when the pope, on a visit to Africa, claimed that condoms were ineffective and indeed only fueled the epidemic. Liberal Catholics are understandably jubilant—"the takeaway is that the pope admits that condoms prevent AIDS," Catholics for a Free Choice head Jon O'Brien told me by phone. "Catholic health organizations, which receive millions and millions of dollars to fight AIDS, can now say it's OK to use condoms. That's incredibly significant." Or maybe not. On November 22 papal spokesman Father Federico Lombardi denied that the pope had said anything that "reforms or changes" church teaching.

If so, church teaching is even weirder than I thought: gay men, because they are already committing a sin, can protect themselves from a fatal disease, but an infected husband cannot use a condom to protect his HIV-negative wife. Because a priest is more likely to be gay than married? Don't be so cynical. For the HIV-discordant married couple, sex is not a sin: *contraception* is a sin. To use a condom would make their sacred-married-love sex "banal" and "a sort of drug that people administer to themselves," as the pope says later, and that is worse than wearing a rubber to prevent the transmission of a fatal illness. As Sacred Heart Major Seminary professor Janet Smith put it in *The Catholic World Report*, "We must note that what is intrinsically wrong in a homosexual sexual act in which a condom is used is not the moral wrong of contraception but the homosexual act itself. In the case of homosexual sexual activity, a condom does not act as a contraceptive; it is not possible for homosexuals to contracept since their sexual activity has no procreative power that can be thwarted." There's a logic here, but it's the loopy follow-the-dots logic that led an Egyptian imam to declare that a woman can work in the same office as men who are not her relatives, as long as she breastfeeds them first.

But wait. Perhaps the pope didn't mean to specify that the prostitute had to be a man. In German "*ein Prostituierter*" is grammatically masculine but can also be the default gender neutral, the way in certain contexts the English "man" can mean humans of either sex. (Adding to the confusion, in the Italian translation the word is feminine, "*una prostituta*.") And in fact, the AP reports that the pope means both sexes. "I personally asked the pope if there was a serious, important problem in the choice of the masculine over the feminine," Lombardi said. "He told me 'no.' The problem is this.… It's the first step of taking responsibility, of taking into consideration the risk of the life of another with whom you have a relationship."

But that really opens the floodgates, because that female prostitute is not just using a rubber to prevent disease like her male counterpart; she is protecting herself—or technically, her client is protecting her—from pregnancy. And contraception is a sin no matter the consequences of conception. It hasn't mattered that a woman who got pregnant could be beaten or thrown out of her home, that she could lose her job, or that the sex might be rape by a partner or a stranger. Well, actually, in the 1960s, nuns in Congo were permitted to use birth control pills to protect themselves from impregnation by rapist soldiers. Ordinary women, even in wartime, are out of luck.

Nor has it mattered that a woman might be injured or die if she conceives. After all, like AIDS, pregnancy and childbirth can be dangerous. In the developing world maternal mortality rates are themselves an epidemic: according to the World Health Organization, about 350,000 girls and women die in pregnancy or childbirth annually, and this does not take into account birth injuries like fistula or the long-term toll on the body of having many babies too close together. The church has been adamant that women have no right to protect themselves from conception except by periodic abstinence, which requires a cooperative partner and has a real-life failure rate of 25 percent.

The doctrine of the secondary effect, whereby a Catholic may perform an immoral act if its primary effect is moral, permits a doctor to give a dying patient painkillers that may hasten death: the primary purpose is relief of suffering, not euthanasia. By the same logic, the church has always allowed for "just wars" and the deaths of innocents that inevitably take place in them. But, with the exception of those nuns in Congo, this reasoning is rejected when it comes to birth control.

Theoretically, every young woman who has sex is at some risk of serious injury or death from pregnancy. In the United States 569 women died in childbirth in 2006, and tens of thousands nearly die every year. The risks of childbearing, even in modern industrialized countries, is one reason having a baby should be a woman's conscious choice. Now that the pope has said people of both sexes can use condoms to protect themselves from a fatal sexual disease, can he not also, by the same logic, say women can protect themselves from the dangers of pregnancy? ■

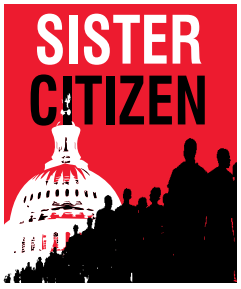
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Melissa Harris-Perry

The Misunderestimation of Sarah Palin

I assigned Sarah Palin's *Going Rogue* in my course on women in contemporary US media and politics. I spent the week walking around town, riding the train and dashing through airports with the book tucked under my arm. "Isn't she awesome?" gushed a waitress in a New Jersey restaurant. My seatmate on a flight to Louisiana smiled knowingly and whipped out her copy of *Decision Points*. On my way to California a guy in a University of Alaska sweatshirt nearly threw himself across the aisle to chat with me. It was a camaraderie with perfect strangers that I once evoked by wearing my Obama sweatshirt.

I expected my Princeton students—mostly young women, self-identified as liberal and feminist and actively engaged in local and national politics—to be critical of Palin. But although they found her authorial voice irritatingly self-assured and disagreed with her policy conclusions, they also found her surprisingly compelling. They thoughtfully drew parallels between her nontraditional (dare I say mavericky?) career choices and those of Hillary Clinton, whose *Living History* we read the same week.



I pushed my personal Palin test one step further by watching *Sarah Palin's Alaska* with my 8-year-old daughter. My kid's dislike of Palin is pure, instinctive and content-free. It's not as though she has well-formed policy positions; she just knows that Palin was an opponent to be vanquished. Born in Hyde Park, my daughter learned to read "Obama" as her first word, because it was plastered on signs all over our neighborhood in 2004. My kid accompanied me to campaign events throughout 2008 and has heard many kitchen table commentaries railing against Palin and the Tea Party. But twenty minutes into the first episode, she was transfixed. She loved watching the baby bears. She was jealous that Palin had a studio in her house: "Mom, can't you get one from MSNBC?" She cracked up with hand-clapping hysteria as the mountain-scaling Palin shouted, "I was never a gymnast or a cheerleader!" At the end my kid declared, "I know we don't agree with her, but her life sure is interesting."

Eight-year-olds don't vote. My students are not planning to switch parties. My book toting elicited as much clucking disapproval as it did enthusiastic bonding. My experiences are not scientific or systematic, but after reading and watching Palin and the reactions to her these past few weeks I am convinced that underestimating Sarah Palin is a mistake of epic proportions.

Much of the urban East Coast discourse about Palin and other Tea Party women is dismissive and mocking. Most Democratic and many Republican commentators rely on a basic assertion that Palin is stupid and therefore not credible. But this perspective ignores that visceral emotions are at least as important as sober rationality in making political choices. Whatever her failings, Palin has successfully harnessed new media forms to engage and direct emotional reactions in ways that are surprisingly effective.

Using Twitter, Facebook, corporate-news punditry, readable memoirs and reality television, Palin has managed to subvert traditional media. Rather than pay for advertising, she is getting paid to advertise her politics. Rather than wait for kingmakers to declare her a contender, she smirks while predicting her victories. Her reality show is a pinnacle of this new media-saturation strategy. The show's producer, Mark Burnett of *Survivor* and *The Apprentice*, pioneered the infiltration of reality shows into network lineups. His ingenious use of product integration exploded the profitability and desirability of reality television. While highbrow critics mocked the lame, melodramatic obviousness of reality TV, the genre revolutionized American entertainment. *Sarah Palin's Alaska* is the ultimate test of this form. Will product placement of a candidate prove to be the flattest, fastest, newest route to the American presidency?

In her brilliant new book *Reality Bites Back*, Jennifer Pozner argues that Americans prefer the scripted "reality" of reality TV to the messy complexity of our lives because these shows "both play to and reinforce deeply ingrained societal biases about women and men, love and beauty, race and class, consumption and happiness in America." And Palin is the perfect reality-show star: more ruthless, more eloquent, more audaciously dishonest, more single-mindedly ambitious, more likable and eminently more electable than Hillary Clinton in 2008. She is a pencil skirt–wearing marathoner who operates without a shred of shame or self-doubt. There is something remarkable and frightening about the depth of her belief in her narrative. Every criticism, every defeat, every attack is just evidence of the virtue of her chosen path. Her show replaces the tough tradeoffs of a politically complicated and economically insecure world with a fiery self-assurance born of the hard, bright blindness of righteousness. In uncertain times, this unassailable certainty, set in the compelling aesthetic of the American frontier and packaged with pitch-perfect editing, proves magnetic even for those who disagree with her.

Pozner reminds us that media are "as much a dissemination mechanism for ideological persuasion as…a means of entertainment;" they are "our most common agent of socialization, shaping and informing our collective ideas about people, politics and public policy." Media, especially reality TV, encourage us to think less and buy more. They capture our emotions and silence our inner critic. They send us in search of products to fulfill our deepest desires. Palin may just be the political embodiment of our contemporary cultural moment; a presidential candidate born from TV's easy emotional draw and limited analytic capacity, a candidate who needs only 140 characters to explain policy, a candidate who attracts us even when she repulses us. As with reality TV, to underestimate Palin is to invite her to reach ever deeper into the American consciousness. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books & the Arts.

Risk the Game

by MARILYNNE ROBINSON

William James was born in 1842 and died in 1910. His contemporary, the philosopher George Santayana, said James "represented the true America, and represented in a measure the whole ultramodern, radical world." He continues to be strikingly radical, and modern as well, though the richness of his vision creates a modernity that is as sunlight to moonlight, to borrow a phrase of his, compared with the wised-up and rather disheartened worldview we associate with this term.

Through the whole of his work, James elaborates, without repetition, a philosophic method that never becomes a system or an ideology. This is a conscious and highly meaningful act of restraint, one that paradoxically opens and enlarges the conceptual universe of philosophy. In his *Principles of Psychology* he says, "The only real truth about the world, apart from particular purposes, is the *total* truth." This standard, though impossible in itself, permits and requires crucial inclusions that have not been characteristic of dominant schools of modern thought. He says, "The world contains consciousness as well as atoms—and the one must be written down as just as essential as the other, in the absence of any declared purpose regarding them on the creator's part, or in the absence of any creator.... Atoms alone, or consciousness alone, are precisely equal mutilations of the truth." James insists that reality, philosophically understood, must include humankind and all it entails, notably thought itself, on equal terms with all other phenomena. The great ages in history, he says, "have said to the human being, 'the inmost nature of the reality is congenial to *powers* which you possess.'" This may sound to us like an optimism the culture has outlived. But he may only be describing an exceptionalism we dread to acknowledge.

James's philosophy has the qualities of a lucid and deeply coherent vision that is not to be distinguished from his method. He says, "If philosophy is more a matter of passionate vision than of logic—and I believe it is, logic only finding reasons for the vision afterwards," then a vision that is defective or thin fails as philosophy. He brings an aesthetic standard to bear on thought, discovering "a certain native poverty of mental demand" in the work of some contemporaries, admiring by comparison scholasticism and Hegel because they both "ran thick." A great philosophy must create a conceptual world large enough for a vigorous mind to inhabit, and within which, and against which, it can exercise its powers. His "pragmatism," his insistence that ideas are meaningful not for their internal logic or coherence but in the ways they are reflected in behavior, secures a central place for thought within phenomenal reality by underscoring its effect. For better and worse, subjectively and therefore objectively, ideas shape the world.

PRINT COLLECTION, THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

William James, photographed by Alice Boughton

The Heart of William James
Edited by Robert Richardson.
Harvard. 342 pp. $29.95.

On no grounds whatever, our chastened worldview is taken to require the exclusion from philosophic thought of the human self as experience. Now, when our mingled nature is overwhelmingly an issue in determining the future of the planet, we fold ourselves into the natural order that only we can threaten, as if it were realism rather than evasion to minimize our singular gifts and propensities and to pass ourselves off as nothing more than the cleverest of the apes. Like old Adam hiding in the Edenic underbrush, trying to deny that his presence has added any new element to the world's being, we minimize the fact that we, alone in nature, can and do make choices whose consequences are profound, endless, unfathomable. Refusing our exceptionalism we deny its essence and mystery—the mind in time and through time, the ponderings of aged civilizations as surely as the sudden lonely insight. The openness of James's method to the reality of everything human is sound and empirical. In this and in much else he represents choices we would do well to return to, options we would still find of use.

It is difficult for any selection to do justice to the thought of William James, and difficult as well for a reviewer to do justice to the seventeen fine essays collected in *The Heart of William James*. He is fortunate to have Robert Richardson as his biographer, editor and interpreter, a kindred spirit whose admiration for James is thoroughly compounded with his enjoyment of him. He makes the great man accessible as if he were presenting an honored friend, ready

Marilynne Robinson is a novelist and essayist. Among her books are Gilead, *which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2005, and, most recently,* Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness From the Modern Myth of the Self. *She teaches at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop and lives in Iowa City.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to step out of the way and allow a wonderful conversation to begin. And James is indeed a remarkable acquaintance, full of the pleasures of fine prose and humorous insight, and demanding all the same.

Thought, the continuous interior weather called thinking, was vitally important to James, for a number of years perhaps a matter of life and death. As a young man he passed through a profound and prolonged crisis, mental or emotional or spiritual, insofar as such distinctions can be thought of as meaningful to him. In retrospect he laid his despair to his loss of belief in freedom of the will. His depression was disabling to him physically, and the cures he sought out in Europe did nothing to relieve it. He struggled with thoughts of suicide. Then he read a book by the French philosopher Charles Bernard Renouvier, who argued that one was made free by acting as if he were free. So began his convalescence, and after it an extraordinary career that made him internationally famous in his lifetime and a figure of continuing influence in American and world culture.

It seems reasonable to speculate that these dark years moved James to immerse himself in the study of the new science of psychology and also to develop a philosophy that emphatically foregrounds the mind. His experience of an idea as an entrapment may have moved him to develop his spacious, pluralist, open philosophy, which never subordinates the reports of consciousness to a system, and neither precludes new insight nor denies the authority of the context of individual consciousness that so largely determines issues of ambivalence or belief/disbelief. (For James these latter form one category, one settled state of mind.)

From our perspective, James's account of his depression might itself seem questionable, since it does fall far outside the range of our understanding of such things, even calling up that ungenerous but respectable critical method rightly named suspicion. To chalk it up to genetics or chemical imbalance or to lay it to the complexities of his childhood and family might seem more plausible to the general educated reader. We tend to undervalue the importance of thinking and of books in one part of our cultural mind, even while we live among great libraries and universities. One need only mention Newton or Darwin to make the point that ideas and books participate very deeply in reality—in Jamesian terms, they do indeed inform behavior—and therefore it seems fair to believe that James's sufferings were as he described them and ended as he said they did, with his reading of Charles Renouvier.

"Will" was a potent concept in the thought of the time, and it is crucial to James's thinking. In the first of these essays, "What Is an Emotion?," though he makes no allusion to it, James is writing from a perspective rather like that he describes in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, of one looking back from the far side of a life-altering and wholly subjective event, in his case an overwhelming depression, and considering the understanding with which he emerged from it. He makes references in his treatment of emotion to the science of the moment, unsettled on the subject then as it is now. What he proposes might finally seem to the modern reader to reflect critical thought less than it does a stoical nineteenth-century upbringing, perhaps reflecting class and gender. And this in turn might create a presumption against him that would diminish the pleasure of reading on. He is, however, entirely deserving of the reader's trust.

James argues that emotion is not prior to its expression but identical with it, and that emotion can be limited by the decision to contain its expression. In his view, this would not mean its suppression, an idea that takes an emotion to be a fixed quantity that will either be expended in some proportion to its strength, or will be put out of sight, to fester or to distort the consciousness forced to contain it. Rather, he says, composure *diminishes* fear, calm *dissipates* anger. Over time or from a little distance the nature of the emotion will change—"Refuse to express a passion, and it dies." And, as a corollary, "if we wish to conquer undesirable emotional tendencies in ourselves, we must assiduously, and in the first instance cold-bloodedly, go through the *outward motions* of those contrary dispositions we prefer to cultivate," kindliness, cheerfulness and geniality, for example. He knows he is repeating a commonplace. He says, "there is no more valuable precept in moral education than this." So he has no doubt seen instances of cold-blooded kindliness and probably dealt in it himself.

But the assumption that in this way the will can shape not only behavior but experience too means there is nothing false in this sort of feigning, though James's language suggests he is alive to the humor of it. Skeptics might dismiss it as hypocrisy, but this would be the consequence of an assumption very foreign to his thinking, that the true self is another fixed quantity, that it has no role in determining its own character or shaping its own moral aesthetic. Suspicions might arise because James is in fact proposing a regime of good manners, an assertion of the will relative to oneself that would involve tact and restraint, and would make one a better friend, a better citizen. If this seems at first a less thrilling notion than the will to power, also abroad in the world at the time, James's implicit response is the power, magnanimity and embrace of individual human consciousness he enacts in his writing. He is the perceiver eager to grant the autonomy, the essential unknowability, of everything and anything.

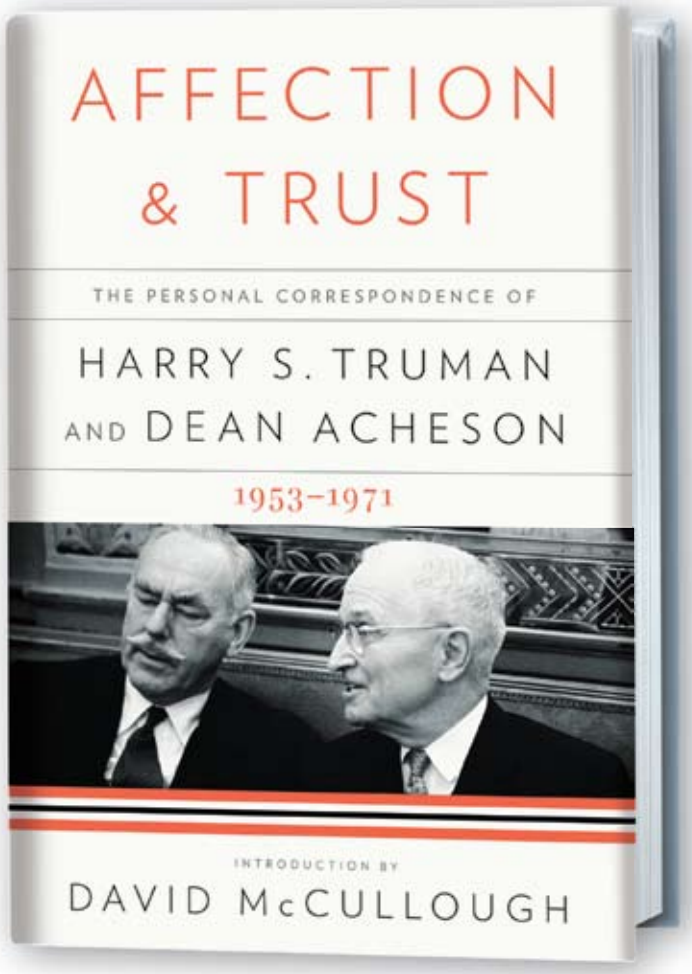
The James persona, an affable presence, a voice thinking, always draws attention to itself as one perceiver, always speaking its mind, as they say, sometimes prying apart conventional associations to consider their workings, sometimes mildly and ironically overturning the world of great opinion, Kant, Hegel, Spencer, by appeal to an audience as fellow perceivers. The voice is personal and impersonal, singular and universal, like the voice of Walt Whitman, whom James sometimes quotes at length and whom he calls "a contemporary prophet."

Freedom for James has a civil and moderated form, or a complex contextuality, for which America as an idea provides him with terms. Everything central to James's work is a consequence of his refusal to countenance the idea that there is an ontological hierarchy that grants a greater degree of reality to any system or abstraction or anything objectively known or knowable than it does to thought and perception. Completion or conclusion are no more appropriate to philosophy than they are characteristic of the universe of phenomena. On one hand he grants that the world exists for us only as we know it, and on the other hand he sees the individual consciousness as efficacious, active in the creation of a reality that is also objective, available to our knowledge in a degree that permits efficacy. In his words, the mind has a vote.

And he proposes a deeper liberty of conception in this new world. In the second essay, "The Dilemma of Determinism," he says, "The principle of causality, for example—what is it but a postulate, an empty name covering simply a demand that the sequence of events shall some day manifest a deeper kind of belonging of one thing with another than the mere arbitrary juxtaposition which now phenomenally appears? It is as much an altar to an unknown god as the one that Saint Paul found at Athens." The Apostle saw, among the many shrines to the many gods of Athens, one dedicated to a deity whose name and attributes were unknown to the Athenians. Their intent in raising it may have been no more than prudent. But Paul makes the plausible suggestion that this is in fact the God behind all things, the god in whom "we live and move and have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A REMARKABLE BOOK THAT BRINGS TO LIGHT THE VERY HUMAN SIDE OF TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT STATESMEN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.



"**PURE JOY...**[an] unreserved and surprising tender correspondence"

—DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN

"**A TREASURE ABUNDANT WITH LITTLE GEMS OF STATECRAFT,** patriotism and keen observation by two honorable men."

—KEN BURNS

"**ILLUMINATING INSIGHTS INTO THE WATERSHED YEARS FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II.** The candid views of these two old and mutually trusted friends on affairs of state and the personalities involved in them are invaluable sources of information. Scholars and historians will be mining this trove for years to come."

—DR. HENRY KISSINGER

"**A REVELATORY COLLECTION OF LETTERS,** these missives exchanged between a former president and his secretary of state defy simple characterization. Valuable to historians, the divulgences in these letters will equally intrigue history readers."

—*BOOKLIST*

PUBLISHED BY KNOPF

Please visit www.aaknopf.com • Also available as an ebook

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

our being," he says, quoting a Greek poet. Causality, in which we also live and move, is unexplained now, just as it was in 1884 when James delivered this essay as an address to the Harvard Divinity School, though all our certitudes depend on the pretense that there are no such radical mysteries underlying them.

Here James is making an argument for what he calls "chance," his name for a proposed ontological basis for human freedom. But his argument figuratively extends emancipation to being itself, and literally asserts that being is aloof from forms of comprehension that yield determinism. Indeterminism "admits that possibilities may be in excess of actualities, and that things not revealed to our knowledge may really in themselves be ambiguous. Of two alternative futures which we conceive, both may now be really possible; and the one become impossible only at the very moment when the other excludes it by becoming real itself. Indeterminism thus denies the world to be one unbending unit of fact." Whoever uses his word "chance" "squarely and resolutely gives up all pretence to control the things he says are free.... It is a word of *impotence*, and is therefore the only sincere word we can use, if, in granting freedom to certain things, we grant it honestly, and really risk the game."

The centrality of the observer in a universe of indeterminacy is a concept with a very modern sound. James describes "a pluralistic, restless universe, in which no single point of view can ever take in the whole scene." The physicist Stephen Hawking says, "Quantum physics tells us that no matter how thorough our observation of the present, the (unobserved) past, like the future, is indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities. The universe, according to quantum physics, has no single past, or history." And he says, "We create history by our observation, rather than history creating us." This would seem to enhance the efficacy of the observer, since James's "impotent" human perceiver concedes and in some sense apprehends that a million unencountered potentialities inhere in any experience. James's discipline of tact would not allow him to endorse Hawking's interpretation of our circumstance that it "makes us in a sense the lords of creation." But James's model of reality asserts an equally essential role for the observer. Unlike Hawking, James proceeds from profound attention to the actual workings of consciousness. He is the mind's observer as he is the observer of other reality, in order to engage the epistemological problem to which consciousness is central. In this James is not modern at all, though his approach seems eminently sensible. Hawking takes what is now the conventional view, that intelligence is an artifact of the complexity of physical reality, and free will an illusion. He seems not to find it strange that the lord creator of the glorious cosmos should itself be of marginal interest to the study of the reality it makes and has made.

James does not exclude categories of thought or feeling from among the data that are of interest to the perceiver, and therefore from the fact of the given world. He says, "If a certain formula for expressing the nature of the world violates my moral demand, I shall feel as free to throw it overboard, or at least to doubt it, as if it disappointed my demand for uniformity of sequence, for example; the one demand being, so far as I can see, quite as subjective and emotional as the other is." Subjectivity is for him profoundly human, honorable, distractible, fallible—indeed indistinguishable from a thinking self. In his acknowledging its centrality he assumes that what matters in human and subjective terms matters in fact. That is to say, the phenomena of perceived meaning are for him a fully legitimate part of the universe of things. He says, "To be rapt with satisfied attention, like Whitman, to the mere spectacle of the world's presence, is one way, and the most fundamental way, of confessing one's sense of its unfathomable significance and importance." This is quoted from the essay titled "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings." The blindness he describes is precisely the failure to perceive and value the interior universe that is the reality of any other life, any other mind. Awareness of it, he says, "absolutely forbids us to be forward in pronouncing on the meaninglessness of forms of existence other than our own; and it commands us to tolerate, respect, and indulge those whom we see harmlessly interested and happy in their own ways, however unintelligible these may be to us. Hands off: neither the whole of truth, nor the whole of good, is revealed to any single observer, although each observer gains a partial superiority of insight from the peculiar position in which he stands." His epistemology yields a social and political ethic because he takes seriously the observer as a phenomenon within the phenomenal world.

Even if one grants the harmony of this ethic with democracy and with the consciously American identity James chose for himself, nevertheless his keeping the reality of the observer, and its human character, active as a factor in his thinking is entirely warranted, not only from the perspective of philosophy and psychology but also from the perspective

ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY
PhD in Leadership and Change

A **low-residency** program that combines **faculty-mentored, individualized learning** with a challenging **interdisciplinary core curriculum.**

This distinctive program is for professionals seeking a degree that offers:

- **Quarterly residencies**
- **Academic mentoring**
- **Learner-centered focus**
- **Integration of theory and practice**
- **Distinguished faculty**
- **Flexibility of pace to completion**

"Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity."

Horace Mann,
Antioch's First President

www.phd.antioch.edu

email: **admissions.phdlc@antioch.edu** toll-free: **877-800-9466**

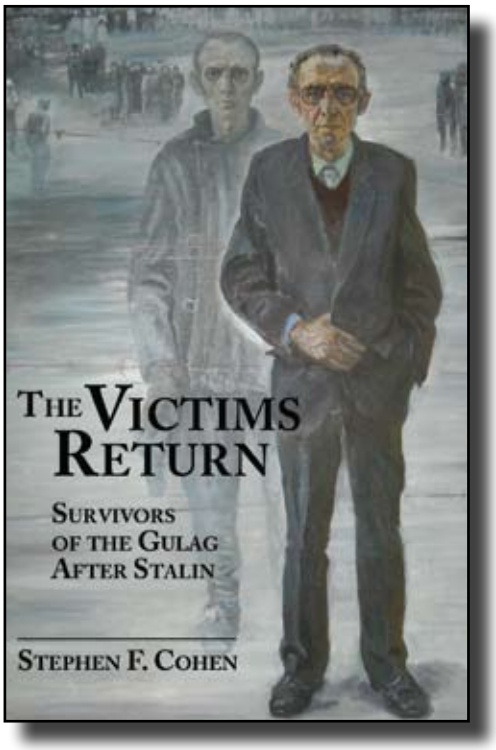
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the science that follows him in positing its centrality. Physicists use the term "observer" in ways that are special to the discipline and defined by context. A molecule can be said to "observe." But however the term is used it clearly describes something continuous with human awareness or attention—of an experimenter, for example—and Hawking uses it only in this sense. Yet his observer is a disembodied potency, collectively lord of creation, free of the tedious burden of mortal limits. This vision has much in common with mysticism, and might be seen as a vindication of mysticism, of Solomon's "Wisdom, the fashioner of all things" who is "more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars." James, on the other hand, gives the observer flesh and particularity, phenomenal this-worldliness, complicating every problem Hawking's abstraction passes over. Words like "beautiful" and "excellent" inevitably become subjective and elusive precisely because they are factors in any actual humanly embodied construction of reality.

The controversy that engrosses certain of us at present, called, however accurately, the argument between science and religion, is a good illustration of the precedence vision takes over logic in these matters. The brilliance of the physical world, the superb intricacy of the cell, the antic indeterminacy of the electron, are used by one side to prove there must be a Creator and by the other side to demonstrate that nature is sufficient unto itself and God an unnecessary hypothesis. Both theists and atheists feel their case is made, on the basis of exactly the same evidence. This is interesting in its own right. The vision that pre-exists their logic is surely determining in the great majority of cases, "logic only finding reasons for the vision afterwards." Looked at directly, this common feature of the thinking of the two sides should yield significant insight into the workings of the mind, and should in any case alleviate the rancor that comes with so many years of mutual incomprehension. James deals with this old controversy in the essay "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results." The dispute, he says, is not really about "hair-splitting abstractions about matter's inner essence, or about the metaphysical attributes of God. Materialism means simply the denial that the moral order is eternal, and the cutting off of ultimate hopes; theism means the affirmation of an eternal moral order and the letting loose of hope. Surely here is an issue genuine enough, for anyone who feels it; and, as long as men are men, it will yield matter for serious philosophic debate. Concerning this question at any rate, the positivists and pooh-pooh-ers of metaphysics are wrong."

If human presence in the cosmos has the centrality James—and Hawking—claim for it, then "this need of an eternal moral order," which "is one of the deepest needs of our breast," is not to be dismissed. Such intuitions could as well reflect our incomprehensible (though struggling and error-prone) ability to comprehend the universe as physics and astronomy. Scientific materialism, says James, is "not a permanent warrant for our more ideal interests, not a fulfiller of our remotest hopes." For scientific materialism, our ideals and hopes have nothing to do with the nature of things and will die an absolute death. In James's understanding, it is theism that places us in the cosmos whole and wholly human. "A world with a God in it to say the last word, may indeed burn up or freeze, but we then think of him as still mindful of the old ideals and sure to bring them elsewhere to fruition; so that, where he is, tragedy is only provisional and partial, and shipwreck and dissolution not the absolutely final things." But metaphysics is only half the conversation, so "as long as men are men," as long as we are human, there will be voices in this vast, cold universe debating ultimate things. And this is also beautiful. ■

"Stephen Cohen brings to life the horror, shock, and despair of Stalin's gulags . . . from the viewpoint of victims' family members."
—*New York Journal of Books*



"A striking memoir . . . Russians today are inheritors of an unspeakably immense crime, and Cohen engages fully—and personally with the debate."
—*The New Yorker*

"Needed, well-written, and compact . . . Cohen helps us better understand Russia's enigmatic present, and better appreciate what to look for as it lurches into the future."
—*New York Times Book Review*

"An authoritative, engrossing account."
—*E.L. Doctorow*

978-1-933002-40-8 Hardcover, 224pp., $22.95

Available At:
PublishingWorks.com, Amazon.com, & BarnesandNoble.com,
or call 603.778.9883 to order

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A) There's this magazine you love.

B) And all these friends & relations you love.

C) Isn't it likely that (B) will also love (A)?

D) By the way, we've got a fabulous gift card we will send to (B) announcing your thoughtful present.

Use the enclosed card, or call toll-free 800-333-8536

Suitors

Meeks
By Julia Holmes.
Small Beer. 189 pp. Paper $16.

by AARON THIER

The rule in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* is not only that it's possible to turn into a bug but that Gregor Samsa, the bug/man himself, will accept that fact without curiosity. It's easy to forget that there are other ways to tell a story in which such a transformation is possible. The bug/man might become a celebrity, or he might become the object of great scientific interest, or he might triumphantly discover a cure for his condition. That none of these things happen in *Metamorphosis* is not the reason for the story's success. What makes it great is the mode and manner of its presentation: the way the narrator, like Gregor Samsa, treats the central problem as a practical inconvenience.

This is obvious enough, but the general rule is worth some consideration. Any story that takes place in a world that is not our own can be understood in two ways. There is the logic of the alternate reality, which must remain internally consistent in order for that reality to be acceptable, and there is the logic of the presentation—how the story is told, how the author chooses to reveal the details of that reality. *Metamorphosis* is one of the great ideas in literature, but the idea is the How, not the What.

Meeks, Julia Holmes's first novel, also takes place in an unfamiliar world, one in which young men must spend something like one "season"—spring and summer and early fall—as a kind of professional bachelor. A bachelor must wear a pale suit, cultivate a skill or distinguishing attribute and visit the park each day in search of a woman to marry. Some men may choose to postpone their bachelorhood by joining the army, which involves wandering through the woods in search of an enemy who doesn't exist, but doing so may prove a critical waste of time. Some bachelors last no more than a season, and some hang on for a few years, but all bachelors who fail to marry can expect a horrible end—a slow death, a violent death or a miserable career as an enslaved "civil servant."

It's easy to imagine how a story set in this world could become a tiresome allegory, but *Meeks* is never overbearing or routine. One reason is the strength of Holmes's writing—her voice is brisk and beautiful, full of a jittery sadness and an uncontrollable kind of joy—but another reason is the way she manages our access to information. We know only what the characters know, which means that we experience the same critical gaps in our understanding and we don't ever see how it's possible to succeed in the bachelor's world. The important thing is not what happens, or why, but how awful it is when something else unaccountably fails to happen. That effect is possible only if the story takes place in an alternate reality, because it depends on our not knowing anything more than Holmes tells us. The fact that the novel remains compelling throughout is a triumph of form and style more than anything else.

We get most of our information about the bachelor's life from Ben, one of the two protagonists. Ben has just finished his army service and returned home to find that his mother has died, her house has been "reassigned" and the pale suit he was to have inherited from his father has been given away. Without a pale suit, he can't hope to win the heart of a young woman, but he isn't allowed to work until he's married, which means that he can't earn the money to buy a suit until he has a suit. He is a condemned man—as another character says, a "death-by-attrition variation on the doomed-no-matter-

Aaron Thier is a freelance writer.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what theme"—but he engages in an earnest struggle nevertheless.

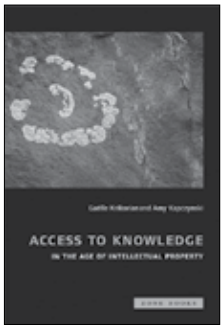
The other principal character is a man named Meeks, also the name of the city's founder. Meeks is unmarried, but he is not officially a bachelor, which makes his status a matter of some confusion. Since everyone in this world must occupy some distinct position, Meeks is occasionally referred to as "the park bum," but nothing about him is certain. He sleeps in the park, he might be a foreigner, he might be crazy and he is obsessed with a man in a black jacket who might be his father. He thinks he's a policeman because he has a relationship—the nature of which turns out to be sinister—with the chief of police. But his marginal position does give him a kind of insight that other characters don't have, and now and then he looks like Plato's philosopher: he is able to poke his head out of the cave.

Meeks is a novel with multiple narrators. Like any literary device, multiple narrators are not necessarily good or bad—they work as well as the author can make them work—but many writers use them as a way to suggest a depth that doesn't exist or to get around logistical problems they can't solve, like getting characters from here to there. Holmes isn't guilty of this, partly because her story is interesting enough in its own right and partly because she manages to sidestep the issue.

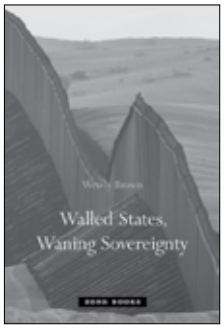
A novel with multiple narrators can do various things. It can tell the same story in different ways. It can tell different, closely related, often intersecting stories. It can tell stories that don't intersect at all and between which a connection must be inferred. It can tell stories that are linked causally but between which a great deal of time has elapsed. Writers will almost always commit to a particular strategy, however, which is why it's so surprising and unsettling that Holmes seems to do all of these things at once. Ben and Meeks live in the same world at the same time, but they are present in the same scene only once. Their experience overlaps in an indirect way, but at the moment we expect their stories to intersect, the novel ends. There are also sections narrated by Ben's father, who is removed from the story in time, and by an unnamed civil servant whose life appears coincident with the story but whose connection with it is never clarified. Sometimes there are delicate harmonies among sections, and sometimes there is no connection whatsoever.

In general, the effect is to clarify things that no character can reliably explain on his own. If Ben can see only the front of something and Meeks only the back, we can see both sides. This is one way of giving the reader a clearer understanding of traditions or institutions—the annual independence day celebration, for instance—about which individual characters might have limited information. I also like the way small details are carried from one section to the next. Everybody eats "city mints," produced on a large scale by civil servants, and both Ben and Meeks spend some time trying to decipher the municipal seal printed on them. Ben thinks it might be "a hunk of precious ore crossed by swords," and Meeks thinks it's "a human heart crossed by shafts of wheat." This confusion reveals less about the characters than about the mints, because the truth of the city mint is not that something in particular is printed on it. The truth—the thing that's critical to the experience of looking at the mint—is that whatever is printed on it is indecipherable. The precise rendering of this detail would be impossible with a single narrator, because we'd be inclined to attribute confusion of that sort to a deficiency in the narrator's perceptual or descriptive powers.

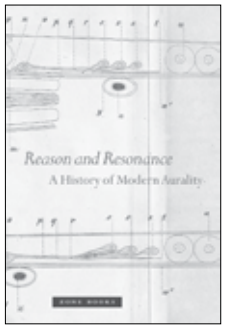
ZONE BOOKS



Access to Knowledge in the Age of Intellectual Property
edited by Gaëlle Krikorian and Amy Kapczynski
A movement emerges to challenge the tightening of intellectual property law around the world.
Distributed by The MIT Press
640 pp., 61 illus., $24.95 paper



Walled States, Waning Sovereignty
Wendy Brown
Why do nation-states wall themselves off despite widespread proclamations of global connectedness?
Distributed by The MIT Press
168 pp., 7 illus., $25.95 cloth



Reason and Resonance
A HISTORY OF MODERN AURALITY
Veit Erlmann
How the ear came to play a central role in modern culture and rationality.
Distributed by The MIT Press
416 pp., 23 illus., $32.95 cloth

Now in Paper
Objectivity
Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison
"The authors' argument here is complicated but fascinating (and, because the argument is about images, the book is beautiful)." — *Science*
Distributed by The MIT Press
504 pp., 40 color illus., 122 b&w illus., $28.95 paper

The MIT Press To order call 800-405-1619 • **http://mitpress.mit.edu** • Visit our e-books store: **http://mitpress-ebooks.mit.edu**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sentence by sentence, *Meeks* is as good as it gets. But what is it all about? At the beginning, it's easy to think of it as a book about marriage. Young men pass through childhood, an experience that almost always takes place within the context of the parents' marriage, and unless something is badly wrong they become a bachelor and begin hunting for a wife. If they find a wife quickly enough, they stand a chance of living well and growing old. If not, terrible things will happen. The novel dramatizes a fear with which we're all familiar: if it's the custom to get married, what happens if we're unable to find someone willing to marry us? Here, the worst thing we imagine is the thing that happens.

But the story is larger than this. "Bachelor" is an occupation that precedes one's initiation into other occupations, so *Meeks* is also about the struggle to move past the probationary period of one's bachelorhood and identify oneself with a profession. Profession turns out to matter a great deal in this world, and the identities of older men are so inseparable from their work that these men lack names. They are known simply as "the tailor" or "the butcher," and their absorption in their work is such that they often behave like automatons. Garbagemen wander the city and discard anything that isn't moving, including people who are standing still. But since a man can't get a job until he finds a wife, and since he has no choice but to get a job after he finds a wife, profession and marriage are part of the same obligation—the obligation to be or become something that others will recognize as an adult. This is what Ben and the other bachelors are struggling with, and *Meeks*, in that sense, is a book about the problem of youth: that terrible worry that we will fail, because of injustice or bad luck or something we can't put our finger on, to become anything at all.

But that's not it either, or that's not all. We learn in those sections narrated by Ben's father and the civil servant that anxiety doesn't end with bachelorhood, and that success or failure in one's early life might lead to the same dissatisfactions later on. There are moments when Ben seems to understand this. At first, he explains the discomfort of bachelorhood by saying, "this is but a necessary passage, and life is waiting just beyond it." Later he isn't sure. In a moment of contentment, he says to himself, "Life would be so simple if this were life," and he wonders, "Why not just live in the world one already inhabits, rather than pining and planning endlessly for the next?"

At its best, *Meeks* is really a novel about desire and ambition. What is it that everyone tells us we should want? What is it we think we should want? What do we really want? How can we possibly tell the difference? These are questions that all the main characters wrestle with, and Holmes is very good at describing the confusion of that struggle. Ben thinks about "the great and thrilling imprecision of desire." His father, who has already passed through the bachelor stage, longs for "the thin illusion of life…to be displaced by the brutal, enormous, beautiful certainty of something greater." The civil servant can't imagine why anyone would want to be a family man, which to him is a man who has decided "to be ordinary, to spend his days going soft…listening deadfaced to the endless narrations of the large and small creatures around him."

The problems of this world are insoluble, and *Meeks* is a very grim book. But it isn't, for all that, a despairing book. Its characters have access to a vague sort of hope, even if it can't save them, and they are able to express themselves so beautifully—so clearly and economically—and to speak with such wonder about the things they love, that I'm not much bothered by the atmosphere of doom. Here, for instance, is Ben eating a pastry and thinking about memory: "He wished it were possible to keep things—the granite pinks of the autumn sky, the charred pilings of the collapsed piers, the sugar on his tongue—permanent and vivid without compressing them into memories." Even at his most dejected, his voice rings with lyric delight.

And so, even if the language of *Meeks* is often enough the language of despair, it's so pure and new that I can feel the joy in it, and the joy that Julia Holmes takes in it. I think this is a lovely paradox: a book written as well as this one—even if it's a book in which life seems impossible—can wake us up to the possibilities of life. ■

The Whole Human Mess

by WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ

Letters
By Saul Bellow.
Edited by Benjamin Taylor.
Viking. 571 pp. $35.

The temptation here is simply to quote. "I am a poor lost woof from the kennel of Fate looking for a dog to belong to." "As my sixty-seventh birthday approaches (or I approach it in the sense that a fellow jumping from the top of the Empire State approaches the sixty-seventh floor)." "Losing a parent is something like driving through a plate-glass window. You didn't know it was there until it shattered, and then for years to come you're picking up the pieces." "I told an old friend in Rome that I'd never return. One can't even see the city for the cars, the Colosseum is fenced up because the tourists have been taking pieces of it as souvenirs, the Romans all look as though they had just gotten up after an adulterous siesta, first-class hotels stink of bad plumbing, everyone is on the make, the exhibitionists don't even zip up between exposures, they walk around on fashionable streets with their genitals in their hands."

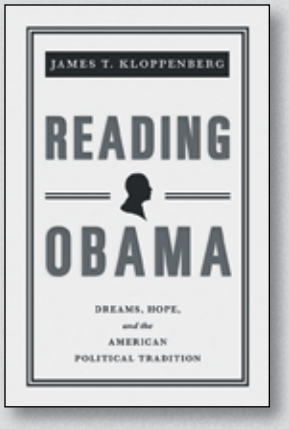
Drollery, mordancy, tenderness, quick-draw portraiture, metaphysical vaudeville, soul talk, heart pains, the whole human mess—Saul Bellow's letters are a Saul Bellow novel, the author himself the protagonist. A Saul Bellow novel! A gift from the grave, like Humboldt's. The great voice again, the peerless voice: speaking of craft, the culture, intellectuals ("those dying beasts"), beach holidays, custody settlements, old times, summer mornings, Chicago, snubs, Jews, Tolstoy. Speaking to lovers, ex-wives, editors, fellow writers (John Berryman, Ralph Ellison, Robert Penn Warren, John Cheever, Karl Shapiro, Philip Roth, Martin Amis), sons, strangers, mentors, countless friends. Cooing, whispering, chuckling, chortling, lecturing, hectoring, denouncing, arguing, reminiscing. The whole life, as intimately as we're going to get it, from 17 to 88.

And thus a riposte to the previous life, James Atlas's openly hostile biography of ten years ago. "The towel with which the bartender cleans the bar," its subject called it. Atlas may have gotten the facts, but he spun them like a spitball pitcher. His Bellow is driven by his insecurities, compulsive in his need to make enemies, utterly selfish in his sexual and marital relationships and incapable of empathy or affection. Now we have raw data and can make some judgments for ourselves. On the letters in particular Atlas gets it precisely and characteristically wrong: "There was a certain impersonality in his boisterous epistolary style; no matter whom

William Deresiewicz is a Nation *contributing writer. His book* A Jane Austen Education *will be out in May from Penguin Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Current Inquiries. Enduring Insights.



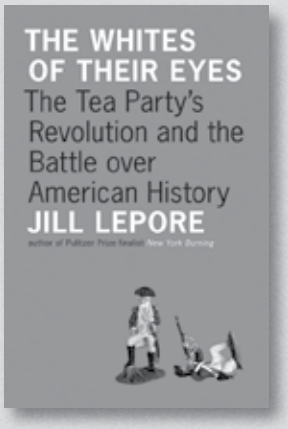
Reading Obama

Dreams, Hope, and the American Political Tradition

James T. Kloppenberg

"Jim Kloppenberg, one of the country's finest intellectual historians, has come up with a remarkable idea as to how we can understand President Obama: just read what he has written and take it seriously. Think of Kloppenberg as the Bob Woodward of investigative philosophical analysis. He's written a fine and hugely informative book."
—E.J. Dionne, syndicated columnist and author of *Souled Out*

Cloth $24.95 978-0-691-14746-8



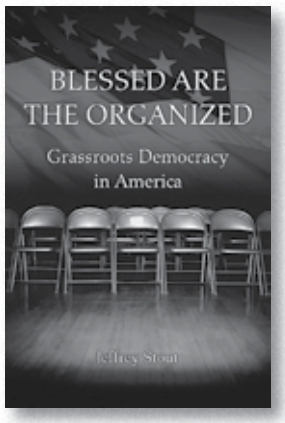
The Whites of Their Eyes

The Tea Party's Revolution and the Battle over American History

Jill Lepore

"Tackling the present, the near present, and the far-away past in one small volume, Lepore has not only penned an indictment of the Tea Party's crimes against history, she's also working in the tradition of Hofstadter, helping edge the academy closer to the public arena. . . . Lepore is a better reporter than any historian, and a better historian than any reporter."
—Samuel P. Jacobs, *Daily Beast*

The Public Square
Ruth O'Brien, Series Editor
Cloth $19.95 978-0-691-15027-7



Blessed Are the Organized

Grassroots Democracy in America

Jeffrey Stout

"This engaging book makes a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion of the character and future of American democracy. It introduces readers to a long-standing and effective community organizing movement, and offers a hopeful but realistic assessment of what could happen if this model were implemented more widely and consistently."
—Robin W. Lovin, Southern Methodist University

Cloth $29.95 978-0-691-13586-1

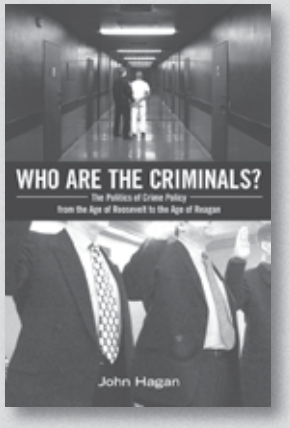
The Wind from the East

French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s

Richard Wolin

"*The Wind From the East* must be regarded as a monument of committed scholarship. It is also a fascinating chronicle of people who, however ludicrous they may seem at times, did on occasion think and act with profound seriousness. For that reason the book is a valuable addition to the literature of the era."
—David Gress, *Wall Street Journal*

Cloth $35.00 978-0-691-12998-3



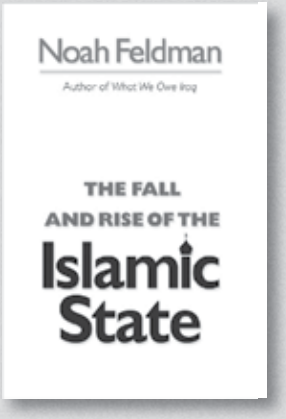
Who Are the Criminals?

The Politics of Crime Policy from the Age of Roosevelt to the Age of Reagan

John Hagan

"This is an important and in many respects brilliant book. The analyses of criminology in the ages of Roosevelt and Reagan are masterful. At its most ambitious, the book aspires to frame a new kind of criminology that breaks with the belief that government stands between society and the dangerous. This is an exciting vision."
—Jonathan Simon, University of California, Berkeley

Cloth $29.95 978-0-691-14838-0



The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State

Noah Feldman

"The growing clamor for a return to Sharia law in the Muslim world has often been met with alarm by the West. But Feldman remains coolheaded, placing the movement in a historical context and suggesting that its ideal of 'a just legal system, one that administers the law fairly,' is an understandable goal in a region dominated by unchecked oligarchies."
—*New Yorker*

Paper $12.95 978-0-691-14804-5
A Council on Foreign Relations Book

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

See our E-Books at press.princeton.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bellow was writing to, his letters have a single tone. It was as if he was writing to just one person: himself."

Nothing could be further from the truth. Not a single tone but a whole church organ of them, for Bellow was always intimately responsive to his correspondents. The early letters to Warren, ten years older and still something of a patron, strain a little for sophistication. To the critic Alfred Kazin, a lifelong rival earlier arrived to acclaim, Bellow sounds at first insecure, then later, as if by way of compensation, ostentatiously clever, as in this, from Paris:

> If Stendhal were alive today…he would do as I do with his copy of *Les Temps Modernes*, that is scan the latest *sottises*, observe with brutal contempt the newest wrinkle in anguish and then feed Simone's articles on sex to the cat to cure her of her heat and give the remainder to little G[regory] to cut dollies from; he can't read yet and lives happily in nature.

Berryman, a brother-in-arms, gets some of Bellow's profoundest feelings ("Just now in *Poetry* I read four Dream Songs, and wish to say, this being the hour when strength is low, thank you. We keep each other from the poorhouse"), as well, in retrospect, as some of the saddest lines in the book: "We must have a conversation about health and disease. Meantime, old man, for the love of Mike stop knocking yourself out." (After the poet's suicide, the finish to his alcoholic self-destruction, there was simply this: "I often wondered whether he would. I guessed that he wouldn't. I seldom guess right.") His last to Cheever is even more affecting: "Since we spoke on the phone I've been thinking incessantly about you." So much for Bellow the narcissist. "You were engaged, as a writer should be, in transforming yourself.… There's nothing that counts really except this transforming action of the soul. I loved you for this. I loved you anyway, but for this especially."

To Marcello Mastroianni, who had inquired about the film rights to *Humboldt's Gift* (1975), Bellow is exquisitely courteous. To Owen Barfield, who was schooling him in Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, he is deferential. To Sondra, his second wife, in the wake of their nasty divorce, he is imperious. To Susan, about to be this third, he is gleeful. "Dolly," he writes, just arrived in Puerto Rico, "I am away, spectacles, testicles, wallet and watch." To Maggie Staats, perhaps his greatest love (they never married and were lifelong friends), he taps his childhood memories, the deepest sources of his feeling: "I hear Chicago carrying on its business, like a bad brass band playing all the old tunes. I've been hearing that noise since I was nine years old."

VIKING/© 2010 JANIS BELLOW

Saul Bellow in the 1950s

John Auerbach, the Polish-born Israeli novelist, a kindred spirit during Bellow's declining years, elicits details of his daily life in Chicago, Vermont (where he had a vacation house) and Brookline (where he moved to teach a dozen years before his death). "I…go out of doors and rinse my brains in God's icy air without knowing whether the tears in my eyes come from the cold wind or gratitude to my Creator." "Well into my late sixties I could work all day long. Now I fold at one o'clock." "Meantime the trees grow, the birds sing, the flowers do their stuff, the green is greener than ever. And there's Janis," Bellow's fifth and final wife, "without whom my blood wouldn't circulate." And Allan Bloom, another late-life intimate—colleague, crony, sounding board, mentor, protégé and finally, in *Ravelstein* (2000), fictional subject—arouses him to novelistic pitch:

> I dragged myself over to the east side of Broadway, and a woman of ninety advanced toward me on a four-pronged cane—tiny, a construction worker's yellow hard hat pulled over her forehead. This apparition passing, there came more: middle-class people, I suppose, but reduced to the status of derelicts, one holding a little boy by the hand while yelling at an acquaintance to get his goddam ass out of her face because she wouldn't submit to suffocation, and then some people affably talking to themselves; and then a nice police dog chained to a parking meter, wearing a cast on his broken leg and barking. He may have been asking to see the humanity in relation to which he was supposed to be a dog.

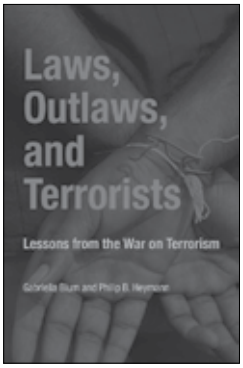
Atlas got another thing wrong about the letters. He calls Bellow "an assiduous correspondent"; in fact, he was a dilatory one, as he often complained. The present volume—handsomely packaged and intelligently assembled—consists of fully two-fifths of the author's known output. That works out to only a little more than about twenty pages per annum, even excluding his years of youth and senescence. As a measure of Bellow's character this is neither here nor there, but the reasons bring us to the center of his art—of his voice, form, method, matter, of his whole approach.

"For whom is a book written, after all," he says, if not for friends? A book, then, is itself a kind of letter. More, it is an offering "in lieu of letters," for "while I can gear myself up to do a novel, letters, real-life communications, are too much for me." Why? "Because I have become such a solitary…a loner troubled by longings, incapable of finding a suitable language and despairing at the impossibility of composing messages in a playable key." Walter Pater had a phrase for this characteristically modern dilemma, "the thick wall of personality"—a sense of the heroic difficulty of disclosing, not the superficial trivialities of ordinary discourse, epistolary or otherwise, but the true contents of your soul.

For this condition, the only remedy is art, the most idiosyncratic and at once the most hard-won of communications. Or as Bellow put it, "By now I have only the cranky idiom of my books—the letters-in-general of an occult personality, a desperately odd somebody who has, as a last resort, invented a technique of self-representation." Letters-in-general: his books are letters, but letters, necessarily, to the world. Put it this way: they are still addressed to friends, only a great deal more of them. "I prefer to think of the pages of fiction

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The MIT Press



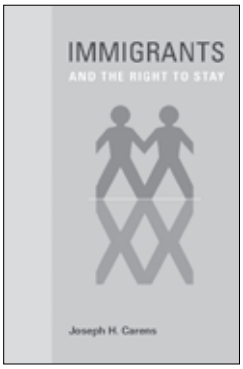
Laws, Outlaws, and Terrorists

Lessons from the War on Terrorism

Gabriella Blum and Philip B. Heymann

"This is an excellent work, with highly creative proposals and sensitive analysis. The most important task in the wars on terror will be the mutual adaptation of strategy and law in order to provide a legitimate basis on which such wars can be fought. It is to this end that Heymann and Blum have made a major contribution."
— Philip Bobbitt, Columbia Law School, and University of Texas

Belfer Center Studies in International Security
232 pp., $21.95 cloth

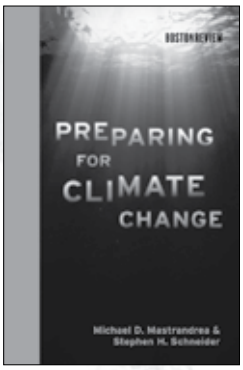


Immigrants and the Right to Stay

Joseph H. Carens

A proposal that immigrants in the United States should be offered a path to legalized status.

A Boston Review Book • 128 pp., $14.95 cloth

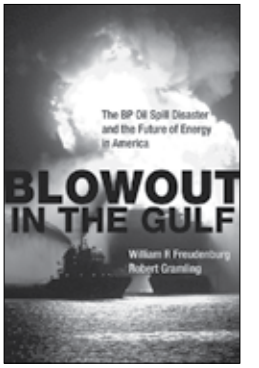


Preparing for Climate Change

Michael D. Mastrandrea and Stephen H. Schneider

Why we should prepare for climate change now by taking anticipatory action in vulnerable regions.

A Boston Review Book • 96 pp., $14.95 cloth



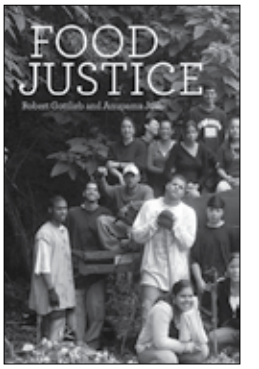
Blowout in the Gulf

The BP Oil Spill Disaster and the Future of Energy in America

By William R. Freudenburg and Robert Gramling

"*Blowout in the Gulf* is a fast-paced, vivid account of the century-long rush to exploit that led to the BP disaster. As finite and remote oil and gas supplies dwindle, the risks, human and environmental, will only increase. As the age of oil approaches an end, the authors point us in other, sustainable, directions."
— Bruce Babbitt, former governor of Arizona and secretary of the interior; board of directors, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

240 pp., 5 graphs, $18.95 cloth

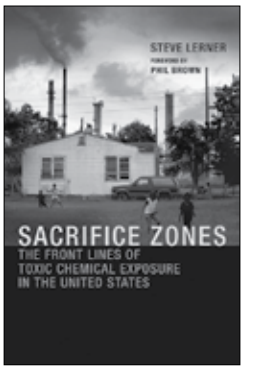


Food Justice

Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi

"*Food Justice* tells us that growing and eating food are political acts that challenge a system that is neither good, nor clean, nor fair. Read it!"
— Carlo Petrini, founder, Slow Food International

Food, Health, and the Environment series
304 pp., 19 illus., $27.95 cloth



Sacrifice Zones

The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States

Steve Lerner
foreword by Phil Brown

"Easy to read, compelling, and hard to put down. The stories are important, have not been told, and need to be recounted in a public way. This book will give motivation to some, solace to others, and consternation to organizations that are exposed."
— Peter L. DeFur, Virginia Commonwealth University

368 pp., $29.95 cloth

To order call 800-405-1619 • **http://mitpress.mit.edu** • Visit our e-books store: **http://mitpress-ebooks.mit.edu**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that I write as letters to the very best of non-correspondents. The people I love—the great majority of them unknown to me." In other words, his readers.

This is more than a pleasant conceit; this is an aesthetic. The breakthrough came with *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), novel number three, in the aftermath of which he wrote to Bernard Malamud, "I took a position in writing this book. I declared against what you call the constructivist approach. A novel, like a letter, should be loose, cover much ground, run swiftly, take risk of mortality and decay." It was a prison break from Modernist obsessions with perfected forms, the "strict little dance" or anal-retentive "constructivist approach" that shows up variously in Hemingway's sentences and Henry James's plots. "I backed away from Flaubert," he went on, "in the direction of Walter Scott, Balzac and Dickens." Joy, appetite, exuberance, plenitude, sprawl—adventure, for writer and reader as well. And also—"like a letter"—intimacy, spontaneity. He put himself out there. Transformation, yes, as he said to Cheever; a novel's not a journal or confession. But no Modernist mask, no Joycean nail-paring, the god of the work absconding behind the appearances. "Having brought off my effort as well as I could," he concluded, "I must now pay the price. You let the errors come. Let them remain in the book like our sins remaining in our lives."

The book is like a letter; the book is like a life. It is no accident that the titles of most of Bellow's major novels—*The Adventures of Augie March*, *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970)—refer to their protagonists, or that the most acclaimed of all, the one in which the author's method reached its ripened state—*Herzog* (1964)—simply names the man himself. The gesture belongs to an earlier time—*Tom Jones*, *Jane Eyre*—but Tom was not Fielding, and Brontë was not Jane. Here we get something like *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, but largely stripped of its protective frames and forms. Herzog is the novel, the novel is Herzog, and both, to a striking extent, are Bellow. "This is the first time," he told his editor, "I've really shown my hand—my face, if you prefer—in any book." A later judgment—from the real-life model for Ramona, no less, Herzog's Latin lover, who ought to have known—called the novel "a book so private as to constitute a parallel to Rousseau's *Confessions*."

It is also no coincidence, of course, that *Herzog* is a novel about a man who writes letters. Bellow's plots have always been rebuked for shapelessness. His career had scarcely begun when Dwight Macdonald, then an editor at *Partisan Review*, was warning him about the "centreless facility which destroys the form by excess elaboration." But Bellow could plot when he wanted to, as any number of shorter works—"Mosby's Memoirs," "The Old System"—amply demonstrate. The big novels, especially—*Augie*, *Herzog*, *Humboldt's Gift*—are after something else, something better, something truer and certainly something more. Like Chicago, like America, they get it all in. Like a letter, they get it all down: topsy-turvy, stream-of-consciousness, one damn thing after another, the way it comes at you in life.

The way it came at him in *his* life: childhood and youth in *Augie*, second divorce in *Herzog*, third divorce in *Humboldt's Gift*, with Delmore Schwartz—the model for the title character—thrown in for good measure. Like lengths cut off a single bolt, the novels give it in full, the whole cloth warp and weft. Father's curdled life, mother's early death, older brothers' business bombast, mistresses' delights and lawyers' bastinado, deep thoughts tumbled up with high jinks in the bedroom and tumult in the street. Lachine, Hyde Park, Manhattan. It's all mixed in there together, just as it is in Herzog's letters (and just as it is in Bellow's, which is why this volume feels like yet another novel).

The marvel is that Bellow manages to keep it all straight for us. The novels don't lack form; they just don't flaunt their form the way that, say, *Ulysses* does. There are parts of *Humboldt's Gift* where the digressions go four layers deep, but we always know exactly where we are. Coherence comes as a sequence not of actions but emotions, a sentimental education ending in epiphany. "I believe he comes out sane," Bellow says of Henderson, "though he goes in mad. And that's news." The stories don't come to a close; the protagonists (or most of them) come to a rest.

All this jibes with Bellow's process. Not for him the Flaubertian squeezing out of *mots justes*, fainting fits and half a page a day. On rare occasions the prose simply came. "I wrote 'Mosby's Memoirs' on six successive mornings in the Mexican town of Oaxaca without the aid of tequila," he says. "I felt as they went into the story that I was striking [the words] with a mallet. I seldom question what I have written in such a state." But usually, and always with the novels, he wrote and rewrote entire drafts. "I have finished my story," he says at one point, referring probably to "What Kind of Day Did You Have?," "and in June I can go to work on it in earnest." "Be prodigal," he told William Kennedy. "Think of all those sperm: Only one is needed to create life."

Prodigal he was. The 340 pages of *Henderson* were boiled down from 4,000 pages of notebooks and manuscripts. In the heat of *Herzog*, he was turning it out at the rate of forty pages a week. *Humboldt's Gift*, he told an interviewer, was written "in my usual way": "Lots of beginnings, three years on the middle and then the last third in six weeks flat out." He may have been remembering the final push on *Henderson*, when after tearing up another draft and writing 500 longhand pages of the next, he'd dictated a new version, revising yet more as he went, at the rate of "eight, ten, twelve and fourteen hours a day for six weeks. By mid-August I was near suicide." The end of a book would be followed by a couple of weeks' prostration. "Have you ever visited a clothing factory," he wrote during the high *Herzog* sweat, "heard the sewing machines rrrrh*hhahh*hrrr with the loudness in the middle of the phrase? I feel like that myself, like the operator sliding in the cloth. Only the machinery is internal and the seams never end."

The *Augie* break was more than just aesthetic. The most cerebral of our major novelists, Bellow pushed himself out into the world. A brainy, bookish child and youth, mad about culture and the Europeans, he had made his first attempts along received and straitened lines. About *Dangling Man* (1944) and *The Victim* (1947), his first two novels, with their Dostoyevskian titles and existential dread, there was something too studied, too neurotic and confined. His MA and PhD, he later called them, suggesting their status not only as apprentice works but also as the products of a kind of academicism. With *Augie*, Bellow began the process of finding his proper relationship to reality. And though Augie is a naïf and Henderson a lout, the classic Bellovian heroes, the figures at the center of his most mature and characteristic works, are like their creator: notion-spinners, sensitive souls, idealists, contemplators, writers all. And while *Augie* and *Henderson* are perpetual motion machines, the later novels enact a more complicated dynamic. Herzog in his hammock; Sammler in his bedroom; Charlie Citrine, from *Humboldt*, on the sofa in his high-rise: they start in a condition of removal, of reflection, of repose—safely ensconced, thinking it over, just themselves and the Great Books. But here's what's new: their stories drive them out. Into the city, into the uproar, into America.

Into the world of Bellow's brothers, Maurice and Sam, big in the coal business, huge in real estate, Cadillac drivers, *ganse machers*, figures of energy and action, not above a shady deal, men who knew the way the system worked, the traps it laid for bleeding hearts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Understand the Fun and Beauty in Mathematical Concepts

Discover How to Think Precisely, Decisively, and Creatively in 24 Fascinating Lectures

Humans have been having fun and games with mathematics for thousands of years. Along the way, they've discovered the amazing utility of this field—in science, engineering, finance, games of chance, and many other aspects of life.

Join Professor Arthur T. Benjamin to experience **The Joy of Mathematics** in this course of 24 half-hour lectures. He is nationally renowned for feats of mental calculation performed before audiences at schools, theaters, museums, conferences, and other venues, and he shows you that there are simple tricks that allow anyone to look like a "mathemagician."

Professor Benjamin has another goal in this course: Throughout the lectures, he shows how everything in mathematics is connected—how the beautiful and often imposing discipline that has given us algebra, geometry, calculus, probability, and so much else is based on nothing more than fooling around with numbers.

Have You Forgotten Math? Worry Not!

Professor Benjamin gives his presentation on the number 9 in—what else?— Lecture 9. Other lectures are devoted to pi, the imaginary number *i*, the transcendental number *e*, and infinity. These numbers are gateways to intriguing realms of mathematics, which you explore under Dr. Benjamin's enthusiastic guidance.

He also introduces you to prime numbers, Fibonacci numbers, and infinite series. And you investigate the powerful techniques for manipulating numbers using algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, and probability in lectures that may hark back to subjects you studied in high school and college.

A Math Course Designed for You

You will find Dr. Benjamin's introduction to these fields both a useful refresher and a bird's-eye view of the most important areas of mathematics. He approaches these topics from a new perspective—

About Our Sale Price Policy

Why is the sale price for this course so much lower than its standard price? Every course we make goes on sale at least once a year. Producing large quantities of only the sale courses keeps costs down and allows us to pass the savings on to you. This also enables us to fill your order immediately: 99% of all orders placed by 2 pm eastern time ship that same day. Order before January 1, 2011, to receive these savings.

© Masterfile

combinatorics—and mathematical games, providing a fun entry into subjects that are often taught in a lackluster way.

Dr. Benjamin assumes you have no more than a distant memory of high school math. He believes that it is his job to fan those embers into a burning interest in the subject he loves so much—and in which he takes such exquisite joy.

About Your Professor

Arthur T. Benjamin is Professor of Mathematics at Harvey Mudd College, where he has taught since 1989. He earned a Ph.D. in Mathematical Sciences from Johns Hopkins University. The Mathematical Association of America honored him with national awards for distinguished teachingin 1999 and 2000 and named him the George Pólya Lecturer for 2006–08.

About The Great Courses

We review hundreds of top-rated professors from America's best colleges and universities each year. From this extraordinary group, we choose only those rated highest by panels of our customers. Fewer than 10% of these world-class scholar-teachers are selected to make The Great Courses.

We've been doing this since 1990, producing more than 3,000 hours of material in modern and ancient history, philosophy, literature, fine arts, the sciences, and mathematics for intelligent, engaged, adult lifelong learners. If a course is ever less than completely satisfying, you may exchange it for another, or we will refund your money promptly.

Lecture Titles

1. The Joy of Math—The Big Picture
2. The Joy of Numbers
3. The Joy of Primes
4. The Joy of Counting
5. The Joy of Fibonacci Numbers
6. The Joy of Algebra
7. The Joy of Higher Algebra
8. The Joy of Algebra Made Visual
9. The Joy of 9
10. The Joy of Proofs
11. The Joy of Geometry
12. The Joy of Pi
13. The Joy of Trigonometry
14. The Joy of the Imaginary Number *i*
15. The Joy of the Number *e*
16. The Joy of Infinity
17. The Joy of Infinite Series
18. The Joy of Differential Calculus
19. The Joy of Approximating with Calculus
20. The Joy of Integral Calculus
21. The Joy of Pascal's Triangle
22. The Joy of Probability
23. The Joy of Mathematical Games
24. The Joy of Mathematical Magic

THE GREAT COURSES™

SAVE UP TO $185!
OFFER GOOD UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2011

1-800-832-2412
Fax: 703-378-3819

Special offer is available online at
www.THEGREATCOURSES.com/3ntn

THE GREAT COURSES™
4840 Westfields Blvd., Suite 500
Chantilly, VA 20151-2299

Priority Code 39347

Please send me **The Joy of Mathemetics,** which consists of 24 30-minute lectures plus Course Guidebooks.

☐ **DVD $69.95** (std. price $254.95) **SAVE $185!**
plus $10 Shipping & Handling

☐ **Check or Money Order Enclosed**

* Non-U.S. Orders: Additional shipping charges apply. For more details, call us or visit the FAQ page on our website.
** Virginia residents please add 5% sales tax.
*** Indiana residents please add 7% sales tax.

Special offer is available online at
www.THEGREATCOURSES.com/3ntn
Offer Good Through: January 1, 2011

Charge my credit card:

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐

Account Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone *(If we have questions regarding your order—required for international orders)* _____

☐ **FREE CATALOG.** Please send me a free copy of your current catalog (no purchase necessary).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Men like their father, a failed bootlegger and everything elser, but cynical and tough, all three of them contemptuous of little Sol the *luftmensch*. "My father looked, when I told him of the award," Bellow writes an old friend at 33, having finally won himself a Guggenheim, "as he had looked at the gold star in my third-grade copybook. Yes, very fine, but there is still life with its markets, alleyways and bedrooms where such as you are conceived between a glass of schnapps and a dish of cucumbers and cream."

But instead of backing away from everything that scorned and seemed to have no need for him—from the world of business, from philistine, indifferent America, from Chicago, with its hustle and its ignorance of culture—he plunged in. At 46, after years on the East Coast, he moved back to the city of his youth, which he had fled in his youth. It was a movement he would replicate for Herzog and Citrine, putting intellect in dialogue with appetite, vision with vice, restlessness with rest—the bracing Blakean damn. "You'll find the book I'm writing now"—it was, precisely, *Herzog*—"less 'tender,' 'tolerant,' etc.," he writes:

> When a writer has such feelings, however, it's his business to lead them all into the hottest fire. He must expose them to the most destructive opposites he can find and, if he wishes to be tender, confront the murderer's face. The converse, however, is equally true, for writers who believe there is a Sargasso of vomit into which we must drift are obliged to confront beauty.

In throwing his heroes to the mobsters and the shysters, the adulterers and operators, Bellow rejected not only the Modernist strictures and forms but also the Modernist emotions and attitudes—contempt for the bourgeoisie, "the commonplaces of the Wasteland outlook," willed enfeeblement, *la nausée*:

> I came some time ago to think of despair and victimization as being at the service of the ruling class and the whole social edifice. It is the way in which imagination and intelligence eliminate themselves from the contest for power. Not that they are rivals for the same power.... But there are other powers from which we have abdicated—powers of gratification, of beauty and strength.

They may have been Modernist emotions, but they belonged to the Old World. This was America. Look around, breathe it in and get going.

What happens in the plot happens in the sentences; the place where the Bellovian poles of high thought and venal circumstance most directly touch and spark is in his prose. Bellow's way with portraiture is often to open up with a barrage of jostling adjectives: "We met Sewell for lunch—a muttering subtle drunken backward-leaning hollow-faced man." He throws them out, the epithets, a boxer dealing rights and lefts. And when he's really roused, the jumble's wilder still: "He wore a black carabiniere cloak, his feet were bare, he drank Pepsi-Cola, he had eight or ten children, he owed money to everyone, and he was a cultural statesman." A vivid miscellany, Bellow's style, like the American city itself. There is a sublime ungainliness about the phrases, a restless discontent, the philosophical-abstruse yoking itself, with loosely fitted joints, to the concrete-vernacular. The syntax comes in a tumble, submitting itself to the urban experience: "A mysterious tremor, dust, vapor, emanation of stupendous effort traveled with the air, over me on top of the great establishment, so full as it was, and over the clinics, clinks, factories, flophouses, morgue, skid row."

It's like drinking from a fire hose. This is your brain on Bellow. There's as much perception in his prose per square inch as there is thought in Henry James. He looks the facts in the face. Under such attention, everything is lovely: "the patrons of the Russian Bath are cast in an antique form. They have swelling buttocks and fatty breasts as yellow as buttermilk. They stand on thick pillar legs affected with a sort of creeping verdigris or blue-cheese mottling of the ankles." But also, often, there's a kind of coarse approximateness, a roughness like a rough guess, life handled largely, with stiff workman's gloves: "Upstairs, on the television screen in the locker room, little dudes and grinning broads make smart talk or leap up and down." And finally, behind it all, there is the tension of an enormous highbrow intelligence being held in check, diverted. Registered, finally, in an exquisite dryness of manner, like Scotch evaporating on the tongue.

Herzog, Sammler, Citrine: they think, but they are not thinkers in the usual sense, professional intellectuals, and neither, quite deliberately, was Bellow. Having come of age in young Marxist Depression-era Chicago, having gone east to seek his literary fortune amid an even more hypertrophically intellectualized and politicized milieu, the *Partisan Review* crowd in its heyday, living in a century of omnivorous ideas and cannibalistic ideologies, he distrusted the big theory, the blanket explanation. The postwar scene was only worse. Already by 1948 he is bemoaning "our failing connection to reality." Journalism, sociology, political talk, "the canned goods of the intellectuals"—all of these he saw as mass delusions, groupthink on a global scale. All the official sources of cultural authority were suspect to him, all the "centers": *Partisan* (they were the "dying beasts"), New York, the Ivy League, Europe.

"I must say, here"—he is referring to the University of Minnesota, where he taught as a young man—"that sociologists are the greater offenders. I listen to them…with every effort to be fair and understanding but I can't make out their Man.... The creature the theologians write about is far closer to me." Bellow insisted on the reality of the soul, of its powers and greatness and supreme importance, a conviction he derived not from orthodox belief or any other kind but from his own intuitions and intimations, his encounter with himself and others. The soul: individual, unique, immediate, irreducible—not an average, not a notion. "The novelist labors in character," he writes here, eschewing the Village's fashionable Freudianism, "not in psychology, which is easier and swifter; the psychology of a man comes from many different sources, a theory that is shared; the vision of him as a character comes from the imagination of one man." Vision, imagination, art: this is the way to get at the truth, to get at the soul. Instead of talking about what matters, he says here, we should talk about "what *really* matters"—not received concepts or causes but feeling, perception, experience, the world as it arrives to us direct. "What I felt all through," he says of Cheever's novel *Falconer*, "was an enraged determination to state the basic facts."

His own tendency to think the general thought he recognized and sought to guard against. "Hattie in 'The Yellow House' and *Henderson* and 'The Old System' seem to me my most interesting things," he writes, "because they are not argued." His notion-spinning heroes were a way of keeping his own intellect at arm's length, ironizing the will to master mentally chaotic circumstances. His novels aren't essays, and they don't contain essays, either. Herzog's cogitation and the others'—it is mobile, improvisational, circumstantial, speculative, the mind wrestling with reality, not shutting it in the cellar. When Bellow started a literary magazine, the *Noble Savage*, in 1959, his goal, he said, was to get writers out of the "nutshells" into which the twentieth century had shut them and "into the world again." "It's a lucky man

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GET A PHONE. MAKE A STATEMENT.

CREDO members support
LGBT RIGHTS

CREDO members support
RUCKUS SOCIETY
Photo ©2010 Anita Sarkeesian

CREDO members support
MERCY CORPS
Photo: Miguel Samper
for Mercy Corps

Join the only phone company that supports progressive causes with every call. Since 1985, CREDO has raised $65 million for groups working for social change.

SWITCH TO CREDO MOBILE AND GET A CONTRACT BUYOUT CREDIT + 25% OFF YOUR MONTHLY SERVICE FEE FOR 1 YEAR.*

888.331.1683
mention special offer code: 500811

credomobile.com/thenation25
offer expires 12/31/2010

25 YEARS PROGRESSIVE CHANGE

CREDO™ mobile

more than a network.
a movement.

*All with two-year CREDO Mobile service agreement. Offer subject to credit qualification. Offer available only to new CREDO Mobile customers. Activation fee of $30/line applies. Contract buyout credit: We will credit your CREDO Mobile account (up to $200 per line, up to 3 lines) after you send us the contract buyout credit form, with proof of your prior carrier's termination fee charges. 25% discount applies to monthly voice plan fee. BlackBerry®, RIM®, Research In Motion® and related trademarks, names and logos are the property of Research In Motion Limited and are registered and/or used in the U.S. and countries around the world. Used under license from Research In Motion Limited. ©2010 CREDO.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who has a generous style," he writes, "and can accept the wider range of other people's facts." Other people's facts: reality as it exists apart from us. His friend Allan Bloom said it brilliantly and best: "He has always understood that even if you are on your way from Becoming to Being, you still have to catch the train at Randolph Street."

Understanding, for Bellow, begins in feeling—hardly an intellectual's position or, these days, even a comprehensible one. Citrine, we read, is a man who has decided "to follow the threads of spirit he had found within himself to see where they might lead." That is why Bellow's memories of childhood were always his essential touchstone. "Love reclaims one for reality," he writes here—that same love that he felt for his readers. And that is why he insisted, to Alfred Kazin, that when it comes to judging a work of literature, "The first criterion is enjoyment, and so are the second and third criteria." Bellow was against interpretation long before another writer got there. "While our need for meanings is certainly great," he wrote in a 1959 essay, "our need for concreteness, for particulars, is even greater." And that is why he thought by telling stories.

In his letters, too. "When people ask me how I am, I am always inclined to answer like a Roman I once saw knocked down by a Vespa. When people ran toward him to ask how he was, he said, 'I was better before.'" But the greatest story here is just the life itself, unfolding haphazardly but finding its own echoes and ironies, its dramas and denouements. We feel the racing excitement as the author gets another novel up to speed. ("I'm writing a book, growing a new life the way newts grow tails.") We weigh the ratios of vulnerability, manipulation, love and wounded pride in his letters to his sons. We follow subplots as they arch across the decades—most strikingly, the one that starts right off the bat. Bellow is 17 and denouncing, with high self-consciousness and full Russian flourishes, the girl who has refused him for another. "Some day when I am in my dotage," he concludes, "and you are many chinned and obese we may be reconciled." They must have been, for 64 impossible years and 500-plus pages later, we read the remembrance that Bellow composed for her memorial service.

Most compelling is the author's converse with his fellow writers. Beyond the letters, there are beautiful elegies here for Malamud ("We were cats of the same breed"), Warren ("a great-souled man") and Ellison ("It took great courage…to insist as Ralph did on the priority of art and the independence of the artist"). There is a series of marvelously pithy letters to the Guggenheim Foundation in support of younger authors: James Baldwin, Grace Paley, Louise Glück. And there is a whole raft of sympathetic but exacting critiques: to Malamud on *God's Grace*, to William Kennedy on *Ironweed*, to Cynthia Ozick on *The Messiah of Stockholm*, to Martin Amis on *The Information*, to Philip Roth on *I Married a Communist*.

Toward younger writers his generosity was unfeigned and unstinting. "I knew when I hit Chicago…and read your stories," he writes to Roth, "that you were the real thing. When I was a little kid, there were still blacksmiths around, and I've never forgotten the ring of a real hammer on a real anvil." In our age of diminishing expectations for culture and the novel, his example has the power to inspire yet new generations still: his work, for the scope of its ambition; his letters, for the devotion that they unapologetically proclaim. "The name of the game is not Social Security. What an error! Social Security is an entirely different game. The name of the game is Give All." ■

The Dirty Halo

by JANA PRIKRYL

Sarah
The Life of Sarah Bernhardt.
By Robert Gottlieb.
Yale. 233 pp. $25.

A Short History of Celebrity
By Fred Inglis.
Princeton. 311 pp. $29.95.

"The trade of a celebrity, pure and simple, had been invented, I think, before she came to London," wrote Henry James of Sarah Bernhardt's mobbed arrival in England, with the Comédie-Française, in the summer of 1879. "If it had not been, it is certain she would have discovered it." Speculating on the rumor that she was planning a tour of the United States, James couldn't resist a deeper thrust of his rapier: "She is too American not to succeed in America. The people who have brought to the highest development the arts and graces of publicity will recognize a kindred spirit in a figure so admirably adapted for conspicuity." From there it was a small thing to finish her off: "Charming as are some of her gifts, peculiar and picturesque as is her whole artistic personality, it cannot in the least be said that she is a consummate actress."

It's a familiar turn, the curdling of the critic's enthusiasms. Two years earlier, catching Bernhardt in Paris in the daunting role of the widow of Hector in Racine's *Andromaque*, James had been surprised, moved, provoked to think, and he tingled: "This part is a poor one; it is narrow and monotonous, and offers few brilliant opportunities. But [the actress] knows how to make opportunities…. Her rendering of the part is one more proof of her singular intelligence—of the vivacity of her artistic nature."

Somewhere in the span of those two years (or maybe during passage on a Channel steamer) Bernhardt had mutated from "artist" to "celebrity"—just in James's mind, of course; by 1877 her fame was indisputable—and so she called for a different critical approach. His prediction about America was certainly acute; his sneers about Bernhardt's acting, though, were not exceptional. Bernhardt's vastly energetic, peripatetic fifty-year career drew tributes from serious, season-making critics like Francisque Sarcey but was also trailed by a swarm of howling reviews, caricatures, parodies, merchandising blitzes and rancorous memoirs by former friends. James was hardly alone in crowning Bernhardt with the dirty halo of celebrity.

Contemporary accounts of her performances sketch a drastic, volatile figure. In reviving Victor Hugo's play *Hernani* as the tragic and triply desired Doña Sol, Bernhardt becomes "the prey of a kind of daemonic impulse which masters her completely, and hurls her into an attitude of almost cataleptic excellence and impressiveness," wrote one critic. Her gestures are "febrile" and "often instinct with passion." Her speech is all but consumed by inner turmoil and thus emerges sounding "monotonously lovely." Aroused to anger, "she is hysterical and guttural, and her voice becomes broken and hoarse." Elsewhere James expressed astonishment at "how it is that, to simulate blindness, she contrives for half an hour at a time to show only the whites of her eyes." One of her signature moves was to turn her back to the audience and direct her lines upstage.

In short, she worked to be "discordant" and "disconcerting," as the historian John

Jana Prikryl is on the editorial staff of The New York Review of Books.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FREE Hearing Aid Catalog

SAVE 80%

Shop by mail & save

Ready to use
In-the-Ear hearing aids

EarMate®-4000 (enlarged)

EarMate®-LT (enlarged)

FREE Shop-from-Home Hearing Aid Catalog!

Behind-the-Ear hearing aids

HB-23

Custom fit In-the-Ear hearing aids

Mini-Diplomat

Great fit!

- Products praised by *The Wall Street Journal*
- Risk-FREE offer
- 45-day home trial
- Arrives ready to use
- Compare to hearing aids costing $1,000 or more

© Hearing Help Express®, Inc.

Hearing aids have never been more expensive. According to *The Hearing Review*, the average hearing aid costs more than $1,800! ***Yet, luckily for you, high-quality hearing aids are available for far less from Hearing Help Express®!***

You can SAVE 80%! How do you save so much? You order from home and your hearing aids are delivered to your door. You avoid big mark-ups, long waits, and salesmen. Your low price is based on high volume and low overhead.

Improve your hearing risk-free for 45 days in your home! Compare our hearing aids to those costing $1,000 and more. Decide which works best for you. You won't be sorry. We only sell genuine hearing aids. You order easily by mail from a family business with over 600,000 satisfied customers & 31 years experience selling hearing aids by mail. ***100% money-back guarantee!***

Reported by The Wall Street Journal

"A growing array of low- cost hearing aids ... offer alternatives to pricey custom devices for consumers with mild hearing loss." "...many consumers say these devices offer at least satisfactory results at a reasonable price." "Hearing Help Express sells three ready-to-wear analog hearing aids..."

www.HearingHelpExpress.com/WSJ

Our Customers Say it Best!

Actual quotes from our customers. Printed with their permission.

"I notice the difference in my ability to hear in groups and in watching TV with others. My son notices the difference when speaking to me." J.L. – California

"It is real small and hardly noticeable. I'm not telling anyone at work; they make fun of me. Wait till they realize I can hear them now." S.T. – Pennsylvania

"My friends noticed that I didn't need to be so loud anymore. Watching TV, talking to someone and normal sounds that I forgot about are there for me now!" H.K. – Delaware

"I didn't realize how much I was missing. I am a church organist and it is very important to hear correctly." V.F. – New York

Call Now – Information is FREE!

1-800-782-6316 ext. 13-445

SEND NO MONEY!

Clip & mail this coupon today for your free catalog!

☑ ***YES!*** I would like a free shop-from-home hearing aid catalog. I understand there is no obligation and I get FREE shipping.

Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Mail to: www.HearingHelpExpress.com/13445

Hearing Help Express

105 North First St., Dept 13-445 • DeKalb, IL 60115-0586

Free Catalog!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stokes writes in his elegant study *The French Actress and Her English Audience* (2005). The exoticism of her style—Jewish, petite even by twenty-first-century standards, with a penchant for eccentric fashion statements like low-slung belts, encrustations of jewels and the famous chapeau topped with a stuffed bat—added sexual allure to a presence that could appear quite violent onstage. Bernhardt's persona sizzled with more novelty than our blockbuster-blasted brains can easily appreciate. Lytton Strachey, more sympathetically attuned to Bernhardt than his fellow Anglo-Saxon James, evoked her artistry with a clear understanding of where and when it developed:

> Every age has its own way of dealing with these matters; and the nineteenth century made up for the high tone of its literature and the decorum of its behaviour by the luscious intensity of its theatrical displays. Strict husbands in icy shirt-fronts and lovely epitomes of all the domestic virtues in bustles would sit for hours thrilling with frenzied raptures over intimate and elaborate presentments of passion in its most feverish forms.

A program cover designed by Alphonse Mucha for a tribute to Sarah Bernhardt

What can still astonish is the way Bernhardt's melodramatic roles seemed to determine her personal course rather than the other way around—and this is one of the wonders heightened, with vigor and obvious affection, by Robert Gottlieb in his biography *Sarah*. The book's trimness, coming after numerous biographies of much wider girth, plus the celebrity's own memoir and those of several family members, serves it very well: Gottlieb whips the picaresque life into a brisk gallop, and it's probably at this pace—skipping minutiae but never failing to iris in on telling episodes—that Sarah in all her workaholic, mythmaking, passionate but unsentimental force can best be seen.

It is a tale, essentially, of how a woman of the Victorian era harnessed the currents of the Romantic—the high, weird emotional pitch of characters like Coleridge's Christabel and Geraldine and the self-fashioning mystique of anyone (but mostly men) from Lord Byron to Kaspar Hauser—to fabulate herself and by the same stroke bring a new jolt of excitement to a slightly moribund theatrical tradition. Bernhardt seems to have felt things Romantically from the time she could talk. Her mother, Youle, was Jewish, the daughter of an oculist from Amsterdam, and she'd left home in her early teens after her own mother's death and father's remarriage. In Le Havre, at around 15, Youle gave birth to twin girls who died within days. Not long afterward she was in Paris and pregnant with Sarah. It's likely that the same man—a naval officer from Le Havre named Morel—fathered all three infants.

"Does it matter who Sarah's father actually was?" Gottlieb asks in a characteristically perceptive and dry paragraph:

> Yes, because it mattered to her. *Family* mattered to her. She named her son Maurice after her grandfather;… she was compulsively attentive to her mother and her two half-sisters as long as they lived; and Maurice was, from first to last, the most important person in her life. (One of her biographers explains that strong attachment to family is a well-known Jewish characteristic.) Her father, whoever he was, clearly did not share this characteristic, but then no one has ever suggested that *he* was Jewish.

Bernhardt's appetite for family is all the more remarkable given the treatment she received at the hands of her own. By age 3 she was "essentially a foster child," having been shuffled off to a nurse in Brittany and rarely visited (her first language was not French but Breton). One possibly apocryphal story has the child simply misplaced when her nurse remarries and moves apartments. Running into her aunt by sheer accident, Sarah flings herself in front of the lady's carriage for fear of being abandoned again, breaking her arm and spending the next two years recovering. "The heightened fictions Sarah indulged in," Gottlieb observes, "also masked an intense emotional reality." Whatever actually happened to her in the 1840s and 1850s, by the time she wrote it down at the turn of the century (and told it to others who wrote it down again, in different versions), those early miseries and outbursts were unfailingly described as leading to physical collapse—fevers, fits, burns, broken bones, pneumonia and day upon day of bed rest. She cast her young self as the original hysteric.

It was the Duc de Morny—a member of Youle's "relaxed salon" in Paris and the half brother of the Emperor Louis-Napoléon—who, well aware of the emotional Siberia between Youle and her eldest, decided to use his contacts to help install the 15-year-old Sarah at the Conservatoire. (By now she had been educated and baptized at a tony convent school in Versailles.) Two years later he helped get her a spot at the Comédie-Française. As if adhering to a sturdy dramatic structure for her life, her first three "debuts," in 1862, failed to thrill the critics—"That Mlle Bernhardt should be insignificant doesn't really matter very much"—and their casual cuts were salted by the reliably nasty Youle: "See! The whole world calls you stupid, and the whole world knows that you're my child!" The performance that got the public's attention took place in early 1863—offstage. Sarah's younger sister Régine had tagged along to the theater with her, and backstage the child accidentally stepped on the train of a senior actress, Mme Nathalie, who shoved her against a pillar hard enough to draw blood. "You miserable bitch," Sarah screamed, and slapped Nathalie on both cheeks. Afterward, despite threats from the management, Sarah

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

refused to apologize and a few days later "stormed out of the theater, tearing up her contract." Gottlieb calls it "the first publicity coup of her career—the first of many."

Immediately booked elsewhere, Bernhardt spent the next year in bit parts and the year after that, at about 19, pregnant with Maurice (the father, though never officially acknowledged as such, was the Belgian Prince de Ligne). In 1866 Bernhardt pulled her own strings to get back on the stage, enlisting a well-placed family friend to recommend her for a spot at the Odéon. But the impression she made on one of the theater's new directors, Félix Duquesnel, was all her own: "She wasn't just pretty, she was more dangerous than that," he wrote thirty years later. It was at the Odéon, Gottlieb suggests, that Bernhardt "inaugurated her lifelong habit of automatically sleeping with her leading men." By this time she had also absorbed the wisdom of Youle's example in one regard: assembling a circle of cultivated, amiable paying customers. They seem to have appreciated her brains and charm—as deployed in the white-satin ambience of her salon—as much as her sexual favors. Apparently she told a friend: "What's odd is how well they get along together. They never quarrel and they seem to adore one another. I sometimes think that if I were to disappear, my menagerie would go on congregating in my apartment with the greatest of pleasure."

Her first onstage triumph came in a trouser role—a tradition that had been around since the eighteenth century—in a new and forgettable play called *Le Passant*, which Bernhardt had championed because she saw its potential to display her histrionic gifts. She would make herself into a man in many plays over the next forty years: "It's not that I prefer male roles," she said; "it's that I prefer male minds." Following her triumphant turn in Victor Hugo's *Ruy Blas* (and apparently an affair with Hugo, who was then 70 to her 27), she got the offer, nine years after her walkout, to return to the Comédie-Française. Her career had reached its zenith; in 1874 she would have her greatest triumph with Racine's *Phèdre*, despite getting only four days to prepare for the part.

One secret to Bernhardt's success, besides a famous work ethic that shied from no aspect of putting on a show, was her bullish misreading of some of the great plays whose star parts she made her own (and the strategic choice of certain other lemons that answered her stagy needs). Of Hamlet, another male role she played to great success in France and abroad, she remarked in 1898: "I think his character is a perfectly simple one. He is brought face to face with a duty, and he is determined to carry it out.... His resolution swerves, but immediately returns to the channel he has marked out for it. I know this view is heterodox, but I maintain it." Hesitation, ambiguity and doubt were not on her palette, so Hamlet would simply have to pull up his socks. Audiences loved it. (One thinks of Kenneth Branagh's thudding, Wagnerian prince.) To see how audiences could be won over by such interpretations, it's best to turn again to Lytton Strachey:

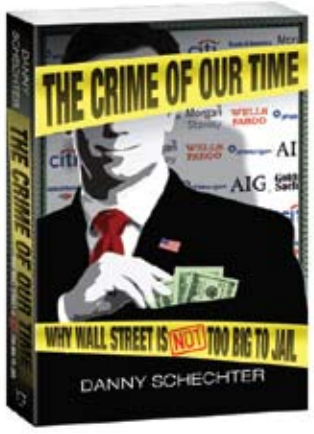
> This extraordinary genius was really to be seen at her most characteristic in plays of inferior quality. They gave her what she wanted.... In them the whole of her enormous virtuosity in the representation of passion had full play; she could contrive thrill after thrill, she could seize and tear the nerves of her audience.... Above all, she could ply her personality to the utmost.

Do Bernhardt's bravura impositions of her "personality" mark the moment when celebrity merged with the art of acting? The French actresses of previous generations whose roles she reinvented—primarily the tragedienne Rachel Félix; but before her, Mlle Mars—had inherited a theater in the first half of the nineteenth century ruled by conventional poses and a declam-

WALL STREET
IS A CRIME SCENE

Bank of America Morgan Stanley WELLS FARGO JPMorgan AIG Goldman Sachs citi

Millions of Americans have lost their homes.
Millions more have lost their jobs.



Our media is not explaining the criminal nature of the crisis: How the Wall Street firms, Insurance industry and Real Estate businesses worked together to rob the American people of trillions.

Get Danny Schechter's new book, ***The Crime Of Our Time***, to find out why Wall Street is **NOT** too big to jail.

Now Available Wherever Books Are Sold • ISBN: 978-1934708-55-2
plunder@disinfo.com • PlunderTheCrimeOfOurTime.com

JOIN OUR "JAILOUT" CAMPAIGN FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Check out PaulKrassner.com
to view a free sample of this autobiography,
his reading at the Winnipeg Comedy Festival.

"Paul Krassner – confidant of Lenny Bruce, co-founder of the Yippies, defiler of Disney characters, publisher of The Realist, investigative satirist extraordinaire – as soon as we decided to create the Huffington Post, I knew I wanted Paul involved. His irreverence was just what the blog doctor ordered."
—Arianna Huffington

"Paul's own writing, in particular, seemed daring and adventurous to me; it took big chances and made important arguments in relentlessly funny ways. I felt, down deep, that maybe I had some of that in me, too; that maybe I could be using my skills to better express my beliefs. The Realist was the inspiration that kept pushing me to the next level; there was no way I could continue reading it and remain the same."
—George Carlin

"Thanks to Paul Krassner for continuing to be the lobster claw in the tuna casserole of modern America."
—Tom Robbins

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

atory style aimed directly over the footlights. One of Goethe's "Rules for Actors" of 1803: "For the player must always divide his attention between two objects: that is, between the person to whom he is speaking and his audience." Rachel redirected theater history when she made her presence the center of the show; John Stokes quotes a contemporary critic who wrote: "Speaking or listening she is wholly absorbed in her character. The effect of this is incalculable. You never take your eyes off from her; because she is so much in earnest, you are so interested." Stokes describes Rachel as "austere, alienating, implacable, more Medusa than Circe." This still suggests that a classical interpretation of the old tragedies drove her style; but with Bernhardt, it was her style that drove the interpretation, and that was the great thrill.

Gottlieb recounts how the Franco-Prussian War interrupted Bernhardt's earliest stage triumphs. As Paris was evacuated she stayed behind and made a self-sufficient soldiers' hospital out of the temporarily shut Odéon theater, where she had recently starred in a play by George Sand. (In her journal Sand remarked: "I'm afraid Mlle Sarah is cuckoo, but everyone says she's going to be fine." In the end the critics agreed that she was.) During the siege of Paris in 1870 Bernhardt requisitioned supplies, pressed her cook into service in the makeshift kitchen, slept at the theater and nursed the soldiers. "It was a role she was playing," Gottlieb writes, "but it was a role she believed in."

Her dedication to this cause (and her sheer endurance) forged what we still assume to be the dimensions of the celebrity's role in society. Compared with this the wartime sacrifices of stars entertaining troops with singalongs and stand-up comedy may look a bit weak—Jimmy Stewart may be the last actor to also qualify as a war hero—but the notion of the actor as our social conscience, above politics but on the side of the people, originated with Bernhardt. Perhaps the personality who embodies these contradictions most blazingly today, if on a pettier scale, is Angelina Jolie: UN ambassador, devoted mother, star of execrable dramas and thrillers, home wrecker and tabloid fodder. Her plunge into worldwide fame also arrived, like Bernhardt's backstage slap of a senior actress, thanks to an impetuous gesture that had nothing to do with acting, maybe—when she celebrated her Oscar win in 2000 by declaring her love for her brother and kissing him on the mouth while cameras rolled.

How at once contemporary and old-fashioned seems Bernhardt's kind of stardom, which feeds the star's personality into every role, and the resulting fame into the gossip columns. Fred Inglis's excitement about this by-now-old phenomenon is evident on each page of *A Short History of Celebrity*—"Hollywood brought to birth the sacred infant of the century, the star," "celebrity was called onstage to enact the constellation of ideas"—but Inglis seems confused about the shape and jurisdiction of his subject. His book plays a kind of hectic scherzo on a very general theme that all of us already know too generally. "The category itself is disorientingly large," he writes early on. Halfway through the book he admits, "There is the danger in all this of sliding into a sort of slack-jawed functionalism, whereby *any* celebrity can be taken as a useful necessity for corroborating the relevant social meaning knocking about the culture." At that point he is arguing strenuously for the celebrity status of the twentieth century's great dictators, unfortunately presenting few insights about their mass appeal and how it relates to more benign forms of fame. Part of the problem is that Inglis skates around the agents and causes of the historical processes he aims to describe. Of Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler: "the evil trinity left deep deposits in all cultural sensibilities." At one point he makes a basic distinction:

> Fame was and remains either the reward of social achievement in the public field or the tribute necessarily paid to power, wealth, and privilege.... Celebrity, by contrast, is either won or conferred by the mere fact of a person's being popularly acknowledged, familiarly recognised, attended to, selected as a topic for gossip, speculation, emulation, envy, groundless affection, or dislike.

Elsewhere he barges through his own gate to announce that "celebrity is a natural award to such men as Walter Cronkite and Ed Murrow, Richard Dimbleby and William Hardcastle." In the end the distinction collapses between solid fame and the gaseous celebrated-for-being-celebrated kind. For Inglis there is no cultural or political figure of the past 250 years, notorious or vaguely known to you and me, who does not deserve to be breathlessly asked for an autograph.

The first half of the book challenges little of our understanding about how urbanization, industrialization and the growth of the press pulled and stretched "fame" from a commodity available only to the

[3 fragments of Mimnermos]

fr. 8
[that lucky old Sun]

Look: up every bone every sky every day every you—
    he goes working his
way up blue earlobes from ocean goes
thrown by rosesudden someone's
already tomorrow goes riding his bed of daysided
gold goes skimming
sleep countries from west to east until sudden
    rosestopped someone's
already earliness opens the back of the clock: he
    steps in.

fr. 5
[a sudden unspeakable sweat]

Sweat. It's just sweat. But I do like to look at them.
    Youth is a dream where I go every night
and wake with just this little jumping bunch of arteries
    in my hand.
Hard, darling, to be sent behind their borders
    carrying a stone in each eye.

fr. 4
[for poor Tithonos]

They (on the one hand) made his chilly tears immortal
    neglecting to tell him
his eyes were not.

Translated from the Greek by Anne Carson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

noble classes to one that could be snatched by any commoner with a talent for being on display. He calls his project an "amiable gradualism…proposing its moves from eighteenth-century reciprocities, to Romantic passion, to the early modern intensity of reflectiveness, to the contemporary practices of feeling-postponement and the carceral solitude of life-puzzlement." The book cans itself, as it were, and then arranges potted versions of Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Stanley Cavell's *Pursuits of Happiness* and Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self*, among others—always with attribution; but one begins to crave the scent of cut grasses and original ideas. In the midst of a cheeky sort of boilerplate on American politics—the "Constitution retains a religious force and lends politics its numinous glow, even to shopworn old senators and Supreme Court judges long past their best"—it would have been nice to hear a word about how the photogenic star power of Sarah Palin fits into all this. If our infatuation with glossy, unflappable figures left what Palin likes to call an "open door" for her degraded political slapstick to come sashaying through, should subscribers to *Us Weekly* consider a twelve-step program?

Perhaps it's inevitable that Inglis's honest enthusiasm for his subject often tips into glibness. Of Bernhardt he mentions that she was the model for Henry James's heroine Miriam Rooth in *The Tragic Muse* and then adds in parenthesis: "Now there is lasting celebrity for you!" And we hear no more about it. Before the advent of film, one of the minor themes of the novel was the evanescent art of the stage, and Sarah Bernhardt—about whom more books have been written than any other French actress—owes much of her shadowy, posthumous image to the characters that she (and a few others) inspired in the fictions of Proust (Bernhardt as Berma), Charlotte Brontë (Rachel as Vashti in *Villette*) and, of course, James.

Some ten years after coolly dismissing Bernhardt's artistry, James was still dwelling on the question. He put his ambivalence into the mouths of two characters in *The Tragic Muse*, a novel about acting (and other kinds of performance) that he finished just as he was turning to writing plays. The book serves as the critic's expiation—lovingly setting in motion the effects that made an actress like Bernhardt so irresistible—and further provocation at once. It reads at times like a parody, in the subtlest prose, of the grindingly cyclical nature of stage melodrama: grand confessions and renunciations of love and art alternate across hundreds of pages. Early in the book its resident aesthete and wit, Gabriel Nash, announces, "We must feel everything, everything that we can. We're here for that." Feeling, for the other characters, comes pretty directly through observation of Miriam Rooth, the aspiring actress James modeled on Bernhardt. Seeing her perform for the first time, the perceptive but quite proper Biddy Dormer "was immensely struck; she grew flushed and absorbed in proportion as Miriam, at her best moments, became pale and fatal."

It's hard to imagine an actor today giving the same kind of pleasure, wringing such pure feeling from an audience. We are all critics now of entertainers and an entertainment industry that would baffle the old biddies; we're continually watching ourselves watching the performer, on the lookout for the moment when we can take our own photo and post it on Facebook. What we grasp without effort is how the great actress behaves once fame has put her on top: Miriam "struck [her friend] Nick as less strenuous than she had been hitherto, as making even an aggressive show of inevitable laxities… he had a dim vision that some effect of that sort, some irritation of his curiosity, was what she desired to produce. She would perhaps have liked, for reasons best known to herself, to look as if she were throwing herself away." There's an echo here of James's censure when Bernhardt swanned into London in 1879; only now it's presented with compassion, as though the novelist were winking at the critic and offering an insight he's learned in his time with the character: if the actress behaves like a crude celebrity, more "personality" than artist, that too might be part of the consummate performance. ■

The Thin Artifact

by FRANCES RICHARD

The Cruel Radiance
Photography and Political Violence.
By Susie Linfield.
Chicago. 321 pp. $30.

To look at a photograph entails a peculiar kind of participation: distanced in time and space, and severely limited in regard to the context leading to and consequences stemming from the moment fixed on film, yet often viscerally affecting. When the object of attention is a photograph of atrocity or abject misery, the viewer can hardly begin with enjoyment. To begin with revulsion would seem to deny the raw response with which an upsetting photograph seizes one's awareness, as surely as a feeling of pleasure would poison that response with prurience. And so the viewer of desperate photographs faces an intractable conundrum.

Susie Linfield writes forcefully about this predicament. In *The Cruel Radiance* her eye for the unplanned, wounding photographic detail that Roland Barthes called the *punctum* is acute, and her empathic intelligence shines when she examines, for example, the wrinkled collar on the blouse of a little girl who will shortly be murdered in Cambodia's notorious Tuol Sleng prison in the 1970s—the Khmer Rouge executed children—or the tattered concert posters on the wall behind a skeletal Jewish woman in the Warsaw ghetto in 1941, who has been reduced to selling armbands emblazoned with the fatal star. To ponder what it means to be shown, but not to experience, dire tribulations like those undergone, but not survived, by this girl and this woman is a challenging task. (One lifetime is not sufficient.) To place such observations in context geopolitically and morally, and then to draw distinctions between analytical and stylistic trends relating to photography in general and photojournalism specifically—that is, to evaluate photographic "concepts of truth and reality," as Linfield puts it—is no less challenging. To do so while also diagnosing a break in the character of warfare, as evidenced by what is defined in *The Cruel Radiance* as new "non-ideological…wars of disintegration," is a lot to accomplish in 258 pages of text. One can see why Linfield understands the parts of her argument as implicating one another. They do. Her book would have been better, though, had she taken on less.

Linfield is director of the Cultural Reporting and Criticism Program at New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, and has served as arts editor of the *Washington Post*, deputy editor of the *Village Voice* and editor in chief of *American Film*. In the preface to *The Cruel Radiance* she identifies two wildly different writers, Susan Sontag and James Agee, as touchstones for her polemic. Her book, she explains,

Frances Richard writes frequently about contemporary art. She teaches at Barnard College and the Rhode Island School of Design.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is written, in large part, against the photography criticism of Susan Sontag. This is not because Sontag was wrong about most things; on the contrary, many of her insights remain sharp and true. But it is Sontag, more than anyone else, who was responsible for establishing a tone of suspicion and distrust in photography criticism, and for teaching us that to be smart about photographs means to disparage them. I am writing, even more, against the work of Sontag's postmodern and poststructuralist heirs and their sour, arrogant disdain for the traditions, the practice, and the ideals of documentary photography. Unlike those critics, I believe that we need to respond to and learn from photographs rather than simply disassemble them; unlike those critics, I believe that we need to look at, and look *into*, what James Agee called "the cruel radiance of what is."

Classed with Agee (who wrote about film) are other arts reviewers, including film critic Pauline Kael, dance writer Edwin Denby and folk music aficionado Greil Marcus. Adapting their mode of freely opinionated first-person journalism, Linfield writes, she wants "to begin developing a new kind of criticism—a new response to photographs—that rejects the opposition of thought and emotion." To study political atrocity and humanitarian crisis through the mediation of photographs, she adds, requires study of "two late-twentieth-century developments: first, the fissure between violence and politics and the rise of non-ideological, astonishingly tenacious wars of disintegration; second, the postmodern assault on the concepts of truth and reality—concepts on which documentary photography has, traditionally, been so dependent."

In order to speak on behalf of documentary photography, Linfield oversimplifies the case against it. Her call for an informed, compassionate response to images of immiseration, and her intention to develop a critical vocabulary with which to appraise photographic reportage, could not be more relevant at the cusp of photography's second century, as we invent ever cleverer technologies for harming our sisters and brothers with ordnance or pixels. Nevertheless, Linfield's rhetorical choices lead to odd omissions and a certain naïveté regarding what she calls "the traditions, the practice, and the ideals of documentary photography." What are these ideals and traditions, and why have critics since the 1960s tended to doubt them? Has it really been only "sour, arrogant disdain"? *The Cruel Radiance* references, in addition to Sontag, a who's who of expert lookers-at-photos, including Barthes, John Berger, Douglas Crimp, Andy Grundberg, Martha Rosler, Luc Sante, Allan Sekula, Abigail Solomon-Godeau and Carol Squiers. Certainly these thinkers and others like them may at times be hyperbolic in their pronouncements. But each has worried in print about how to ensure principled engagement with the split-second array of light and shadow that is a photograph. Linfield is disingenuous when she says that such critics do not believe "that we need to look at, and look *into*" the chemically or digitally fixed shapes that are created when light bounces off a subject placed before a lens, and a mechanism called a camera processes the pattern into an icon that we—people whose visual literacy is "modern"—read as a trace of reality.

The question is how we do this. How to look into a flat smear of ink or emulsion? In his book-length essay *Camera Lucida* (1981), in which he discusses the notion of the *punctum*, Barthes speaks of his desire to "turn the photograph over, to enter into the paper's depth, to reach its other side." This is just what a photograph can't allow. How, then, to comprehend the thin artifact, especially when it shows people we'll never know under duress? Is it always right to look? Is it ever all right to turn away? What do we learn, and can such lessons translate beyond passive beholding into political or existential acts?

Ekaterina Alexeevna Zakharova, a farmworker, in Lubyanka Prison in the Soviet Union, 1931

The Cruel Radiance is divided into three parts. The first, "Polemics," surveys the history of photographic criticism and theory since its beginnings with Charles Baudelaire, and discusses photojournalism and the concept of human rights, the defense of which is often invoked as a reason for making and circulating otherwise abhorrent pictures. Here Linfield considers what it means—politically, ethically, aesthetically, psychologically—to view photographs depicting acute suffering. Her book's second part, "Places," surveys particular catalogs of images and frames them historically. She discusses photographs taken by prisoners and Nazis alike in Auschwitz and the Warsaw and Lodz ghettos; by Chinese and Western journalists during the Cultural Revolution; by international journalists in the aftermath of civil war in Sierra Leone (1991–2002); and by administrators and guards in prisons, among them Pol Pot's Tuol Sleng, Stalin's Lubyanka and the Bush administration's Abu Ghraib. Part three, "People," presents capsule critical biographies of three celebrated photojournalists. These are Robert Capa, witness-hero of the Spanish Civil War and D-Day landing in Normandy and co-founder of the Magnum Agency, who died reporting from Vietnam; James Nachtwey, a member of the legendary Bang-Bang Club that photographed in South African townships in the 1990s, who has since covered conflicts in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq and Romania; and Gilles Peress, who documented the Iranian Revolution in Tehran in 1979 and has worked in many of the same zones of woe as Nachtwey, including Bosnia, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Lower Manhattan after 9/11.

It was under the "tremendous, though not always felicitous, influence" of Weimar-era German thinkers like Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht and Siegfried Kracauer, Linfield observes in "Polemics," that Sontag and her colleagues developed skepticism regarding a camera's ability to capture truths. Like Benjamin and Sontag, Linfield understands this doubt as a historical symptom: "When we talk about photography we are talking about modernity." No one on her list of theorists—including the Weimar writers, who helped to invent the prototypically postmodern field known as cultural criticism, and that wellspring of modern spleen, Baudelaire—would disagree.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

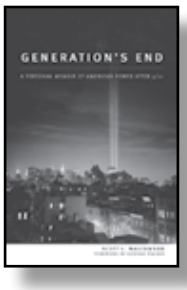
"The age of the Photograph is also the age of revolutions, contestations, assassinations, explosions," Barthes remarks. For Sontag, "Being a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessential modern experience."

The problem with "Polemics," in other words, is that critics like Sontag didn't quite say what Linfield says they said. Sometimes Sontag said more or less what Linfield is saying. The Sontag whom Linfield nominates as her antagonist is the stentorian aphorist of *On Photography*, published in 1977. In this volume, Linfield reminds us, "Sontag describes photography as 'grandiose,' 'treacherous,' 'imperial,' 'voyeuristic,' 'predatory,' 'addictive,' and 'reductive.'" Harsh words—though I, for one, would prefer that the adjectives not be plucked from their sentences this way. Perhaps Sontag also thought she had been too harsh. In 2003 she published another book on photography called *Regarding the Pain of Others*. Regarding others' pain is Linfield's subject, so it is peculiar that she mentions Sontag's later book only in passing and does not distinguish its viewpoint from that of *On Photography*. *The Cruel Radiance* does not, for example, acknowledge that Sontag addressed the issue Linfield seems most troubled by. This is the idea that we—consumers of globalized media—should hygienically refuse to look at photographs of suffering because suffering's urgency is thereby diminished, brought down to the level of products in ads, celebrities in puff pieces and any other trivial thing that can be stuck in front of a camera. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag writes:

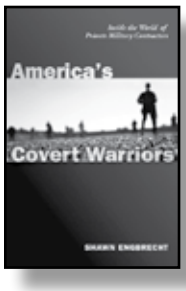
> Consider two widespread ideas—now fast approaching the stature of platitudes—on the impact of photography. Since I find these ideas formulated in my own essays on photography—the earliest of which was written thirty years ago—I feel an irresistible temptation to quarrel with them. The first idea is that public attention is steered by the attentions of the media—which means, most decisively, images.... The second idea—it might seem the converse...is that in a world saturated, no, hyper-saturated with images, those that should matter have a diminishing effect.... In the first of the six essays in *On Photography* (1977), I argued that while an event known through photographs certainly becomes more real than it would have been had one never seen the photographs, after repeated exposure it also becomes less real. As much as they create sympathy, I wrote, photographs shrivel sympathy. Is this true? I thought it was when I wrote it. I'm not so sure now.

Linfield is certain; Sontag wasn't, fully. Still, Linfield does not contradict Sontag's late thought when she asserts, "In fact, the desensitization argument is exactly wrong. For most of history most people have known little, and cared less, about the suffering of those who are unknown or alien." Against such complacent tribalism, Linfield contends, "it is the camera—the still camera, the film camera, the video camera, and now the digital camera—that has done so much to globalize our consciences." She cites the philosopher Richard Rorty, who asked, "Why should I care about...a person whose habits I find disgusting?" He suggests, Linfield continues, "that the best answer might be: 'Because her mother would grieve for her.' The camera has been a key tool—perhaps *the* key tool—in enabling such empathic leaps."

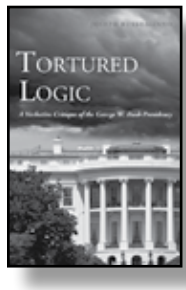
Empathic care for the stranger and her mother is hard to muster if you believe, in meta-postmodernist fashion, that the close



GENERATION'S END
A Personal Memoir of America's Power After 9/11
By Scott L. Malcomson
Foreword by George Packer
Cloth, ~~$27.50~~ ***$20.63***
AVAILABLE NOW

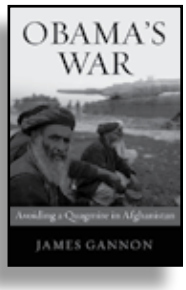


AMERICA'S COVERT WARRIORS
Inside the World of Private Military Contractors
By Shawn Engbrecht
Cloth, ~~$29.95~~ ***$22.47***
DECEMBER 2010



TORTURED LOGIC
A Verbatim Critique of the George W. Bush Presidency
Compiled and Arranged by Joseph Russomanno
Foreword by Jonathan Alter
Cloth, ~~$34.95~~ ***$26.22***
JANUARY 2011

OBAMA'S WAR
Avoiding a Quagmire in Afghanistan
By James Gannon
Cloth, ~~$26.95~~ ***$20.22***
JANUARY 2011



THE MOST FAMOUS WOMAN IN BASEBALL
Effa Manley and the Negro Leagues
By Bob Luke
Cloth, ~~$27.50~~ ***$20.63***
JANUARY 2011

VOTE THIEVES
Illegal Immigration, Redistricting, and Presidential Elections
By Orlando J. Rodriguez
Cloth, ~~$26.95~~ ***$20.22***
FEBRUARY 2011

Please use source code NA1210 when placing order to receive discount price. Code expires 1/31/2011.

Potomac Books, Inc.

Tel: 1-800-775-2518 Fax: 703-661-1501 www.potomacbooksinc.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and bodily matrix we call "reality" has been virtualized into the manipulable code of a Matrix of another kind. Linfield is justly offended by this seductive generalization. But then, so is the Sontag of *Regarding the Pain of Others*:

> To speak of reality becoming a spectacle is a breathtaking provincialism. It universalizes the viewing habits of a small, educated population living in the rich part of the world, where news has been converted into entertainment—that mature style of viewing which is a prime acquisition of "the modern," and a prerequisite for dismantling traditional forms of party-based politics that offer real disagreement and debate. It assumes that everyone is a spectator. It suggests, perversely, unseriously, that there is no real suffering in the world.

Linfield observes how the desensitization argument "implies that a golden age existed in which people throughout the world responded with empathy, generosity, and saving action when confronted with the suffering of others. When, I wonder, did this utopia exist?" Yet elsewhere in the book, she implies that, after all, there may have been a golden age of photographically supported decency: in the early twentieth century, during the era of Capa and Agee. It was then, it seems, that a tradition was established in which "the best photographic portraits, like the best painted portraits, present us not with biographical information but with a soul." This is the type of assumption that "sour" critics—the "rejectionists"—have tried to undo. What if a viewer fails to acknowledge soulfulness in this drama or that Other? Conversely, the belief that soulfulness is conferred by suffering, and therefore ameliorates and justifies that suffering, is ancient. So what if the "soul" apparently evinced by a given portrait is mere self-gratifying projection, a fancy way of relieving stress in contemplating—even allowing enjoyment of—a photograph of someone in extremis?

Another important piece of Linfield's argument in "Polemics" is her discussion of the frequent comparison between shocking photojournalism and pornography. The "pornography" label, she maintains, is a rhetorical trick. It is "used to describe a suspiciously wide variety of contradictory responses: too little concern for suffering and a narcissistic identification with it, inappropriate numbing and inappropriate excitement; lazy carelessness about the pain of others and a creepy preoccupation with it." Granted, pornography is produced for one reason (two, if you count making money) while journalistic photographs serve multiple purposes: to record, inform, advocate. Are the reactions Linfield describes really widely various, however? To be narcissistically, creepily preoccupied with the *image* of pain as a tableau to gaze at rather than an injustice to redress is, precisely, to be ethically careless, too little concerned in any way that might aid the sufferer or educate the viewer. "Not all pornography is 'bad,' that is, exploitative, degrading, or violent," Linfield points out, "which is why its use as an epithet makes little sense." The first half of this statement is undoubtedly the case; it is another way of saying that the category "pornography" is notoriously unstable. Yet if, like Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, you can't define it but you know it when you see it, then calling a photojournalistic picture pornographic, or not, creates the same problem as calling it soulful. What may look exploitative, degrading and violent—or heartfelt, eloquent and mysterious—to one viewer might not look that way to another. Why, then, praise the soulful interpretation and condemn the pornographic one?

Questions pertaining to the truth quotient in news-based portraiture come up again in parts two and three of *The Cruel Radiance*. For the moment, regarding part one, consider the Agee passage from which Linfield has taken her book's title. In *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1940), his lyrico-documentary collaboration with Walker Evans on the lives of three sharecropping families in Alabama, Agee offers a paean to the unfiltered tenderness that Linfield cherishes:

> For in the immediate world, everything is to be discerned, for him who can discern it, and centrally and simply, without either dissection into science, or digestion into art, but with the whole of consciousness, seeking to perceive it as it stands…and all of consciousness is shifted from the imagined, the revisive, to the effort to perceive simply the cruel radiance of what is.

Linfield, however, relegates to her endnotes his next sentence, a condemnation as virulent as any by Sontag circa 1977:

> This is why the camera seems to me, next to unassisted and weaponless consciousness, the central instrument of our time; and is why in turn I feel such rage at its misuse: which has spread so nearly universal a corruption of sight that I know less than a dozen alive whose eyes I can trust even so much as my own.

"Places" is the strongest segment of *The Cruel Radiance*: informative, nightmarish. Here, with specific examples before her, Linfield navigates paradoxes that trip her up when she speaks in abstract terms of soul and porn. She considers, for example, the outré cruelty inscribed in photographs taken by victimizers—and the wily power such images have to escape their makers. Photographs by perpetrators "show that people are awfully different from one another, and that their definitions of what is unthinkable, criminal, or repugnant—or, alternately, heroic, delightful, or amusing—vary quite a bit." What do we do when our view is directed by someone reprehensible? What if we, too, see things distortedly? Linfield admits that this discomfort motivates her iconophobic colleagues. "It is true, as the rejectionists have argued, that viewers often have the 'wrong' reactions to photographs of cruelty, including contempt for the victims, glib identification, or even a prurient fascination that can border on pleasure." (These sound like responses to pornography.) "I am not sure, though, what the right reactions would be." *The Cruel Radiance* is best when Linfield puzzles through the Catch-22 on a personal level, with specific photographs in hand.

A fascinating instance of renegade pictorial meaning is a group of snaps by a German sergeant named Heinrich Jöst. In 1941, in his uniform, on his forty-third birthday, he strolled through the Warsaw ghetto, taking in sights like that of the starving woman selling armbands. In photographs like Jöst's, Linfield says, "I do not see—or see only—images of despicable Jewish weakness, which is what the Nazis intended: I see Nazi barbarism." I do too. But then: "Jöst may not have understood what was happening to the Jews, but his camera did." This last phrase is a figure of speech, but it is inaccurate. Cameras don't understand; they denote whatever they are pointed at. Such relentless, conscienceless neutrality constitutes a dilemma for "rejectionists."

Nevertheless, people do have intentions when they make pictures, and Linfield argues another excellent point when she considers the importance of evidentiary photography to those who have lived through man-made hells. She quotes, for instance, testimony by the Spanish Communist Jorge Semprun, who had been interned in Buchenwald. In Switzerland after the war, he went to the movies; a newsreel showed the camp being liberated. "In becoming, thanks to the film corps of the Allied armies, a spectator of my own life, a voyeur of my own experience," Semprun wrote, "I felt as if I were escaping

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the wrenching uncertainties of memory.... I had not imagined Buchenwald." Li Zhensheng, a newspaper photographer in Harbin, China, in the 1960s, made two separate bodies of work. One dutifully celebrated the Cultural Revolution. The other—he called them "'negative' negatives"—memorialized the humiliation and brutalization of accused counterrevolutionaries. Li hid these negatives under his floorboards until the late 1980s, when twenty of the thousands he had saved were shown in Beijing; after the crackdown at Tiananmen Square, he smuggled them to the United States, where they became a book called *Red-Color News Soldier* (2003).

In a similar vein, Mamie Till Bradley insisted that the casket stand open at her son Emmett's funeral in 1955, exposing his bludgeoned face to photographers. "There was just no way I could describe what was in that box. No way. And I just wanted the world to see," she said. The murderers in Money, Mississippi, were not thinking of Till's mother's grief when they beat her 14-year-old son to death, and Linfield seems to echo Bradley's words when she urges, "We do not honor the victims by being too delicate—too respectful—to look." The quote about the open casket is not cited in *The Cruel Radiance* (it can be found in *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement From the 1950s Through the 1980s*, edited by Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer and published in 1990). To be sure, Linfield must have felt overwhelmed by the sickening number of world-historical examples relevant to her study. But she devotes just one paragraph to photographs and postcards of lynchings, images that were circulated in staggering numbers in the first half of the twentieth century in this country. Nearly a hundred such pictures have been assembled by James Allen in the ongoing multimedia project (an exhibition, a book and a website) titled *Without Sanctuary*. Linfield, like Allen, believes that viewing these kinds of materials can fulfill a profound civic responsibility; having discussed in detail another series of awful torture photographs, she submits a sober judgment. "Every American, I would argue, is obliged to look [at], and think about, the Abu Ghraib photographs," she writes. "We need to feel in our guts, and think carefully about, what these images show (and what they don't); we do not have the option of ignoring, denying, or disowning them." Is this not a fortiori true of photographs like those in *Without Sanctuary*? The Abu Ghraib images depict, and constitute, crimes. Yet the genocidal crime of lynching went on for a much longer period, not in the incommunicado cellblocks of a

GIVE *the* GIFT *of*
an INFORMED OPINION
NATION BOOKS

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE BOOKS ARE SOLD
WWW.NATIONBOOKS.ORG

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war-zone prison but in the public squares of small towns, where it involved a much larger number of ordinary citizens in ghastly rituals of violence and spectatorship.

I miss a discussion of lynching photographs in part because Linfield is a smart critical companion for thinking about vexed looking; at her best, she does become a kind of Pauline Kael of Magnum and the *New York Times* front page. A case in point is her discussion of two portraits of Memuna Mansarah, taken in 2000. Memuna is 3 years old, living in a refugee camp in Freetown, Sierra Leone. One image, by the American photographer Candace Scharsu, shows Memuna with her father; she smiles impishly and wears a pretty dress. In the other, by the Dutch photojournalist Teun Voeten, she is alone and looking pensive. Her right arm, and her father's, end in stumps, the result of violent attacks by the marauding Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Referring, in particular, to Voeten's picture, Linfield admits, "I have looked at Memuna's photograph many times, thought about it, described it to friends, and now I am writing about it; but I am not at all sure how to do these things, much less how to do them right."

> My rage against Memuna's tormentors turned into pity for her, and my pity made me feel manipulated and trapped. What could I do with this pity, which felt so predictable and useless. And then my dislike of my pity—which was now, alas, self-pity—became the focus of my reaction to this photograph; Memuna herself began to recede.… It is exceedingly hard to formulate any reaction to her photograph *other than* shock, revulsion, anger, and disgust.… And because of this, looking at her photograph becomes an ethical problem. Her picture illustrates the peculiar dislocation of our time: we can know an enormous amount, and might even feel an enormous amount, about what is happening in the world, but our knowledge and our emotions have no natural fulfillment in political action.

As Linfield acknowledges, in his essay "Photographs of Agony" (1972) John Berger described the same drift of emotion, in which the viewer's "moral inadequacy may now shock him as much as the crimes being committed in the war." Berger was writing about images from Vietnam, and he hoped that the presumably American viewer's confrontation with his or her political unfreedom would facilitate homegrown insurrection. "A socialist revival doesn't seem imminent," Linfield comments dryly. "And so when looking at Memuna, I wonder: is there any place—any useful place—to situate oneself between pity and revolution?" This question probably can't be asked too many times. Compare Linfield's passage, though, with one from *Regarding the Pain of Others*:

> It is because a war, any war, doesn't seem as if it can be stopped that people become less responsive to the horrors. Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers. The question is what to do with the feelings that have been aroused, the knowledge that has been communicated.… It is passivity that dulls feeling. The states described as apathy, moral or emotional anesthesia, are full of feelings; the feelings are rage and frustration.… The imaginary proximity to the suffering inflicted on others that is granted by images suggests a link between the faraway sufferers—seen close-up on the television screen—and the privileged viewer that is simply untrue, that is yet one more mystification of our relations to power.

The difference between Linfield's criticism and that of Sontag or Berger is not, as Linfield would have it, that they "disparage" photographs while she respects them. It is that Linfield's voice, her critical persona, is distinct from theirs. Where Sontag was brisk, Olympian, and Berger (at least in the 1970s) avowedly Marxist, Linfield is warm, confessional, rueful about her youthful enthusiasm for Mao and common-sensical about the critic's role as representative viewer rather than chief theoretician. This urge to blend a candid emotional response to pictures into a sophisticated survey of photojournalistic practices is the prime motivation of *The Cruel Radiance*, and it is true that this distinction between Linfield's work and those of her colleagues is important. Even so, as I make it, Memuna, in the grievous specificity of her experience, recedes another step into the background.

In her chapter on Robert Capa, Linfield recounts an anecdote from Paris in 1950. "Eve Arnold, then a young Magnum photographer, admitted to journalist Janet Flanner that she didn't think Capa's photographs were 'very well designed.' Flanner looked at Arnold with pity and replied, 'My dear, history doesn't design well either.'" Capa's photographs—like those by his Magnum colleagues Gerda Taro, David Seymour (known as Chim) and Henri Cartier-Bresson—have taught us to expect this mimetic link between a haphazard-looking photograph and the haphazardness of history. Linfield sums up the assumption: "If a picture seems sloppy, it's okay to look." The flip side of this convention dictates that a dramatically framed image composed with an eye toward classical notions of, say, lighting and symmetry implies not authentic witness captured in the heat of the moment but a narcissistic investment in self-expression on the part of the photographer.

Linfield crisply explains that this attitude "confuses moral weight with aesthetic clumsiness." But as she makes clear in her complicated discussion of Nachtwey's and Peress's work, highly stylized representations of wretchedness do place us—we who have never suffered in heinous ways, or live in parts of the world where, we imagine, such sufferings can never come—in a strange position. We can try to imagine. But "we are not inside those prisons: they were." To skip over this fact is puerile egotism. "We are simply too late. The 'demands of justice'…will never—can never—be met." It is instead "the inability to understand, the inability to grieve, the inability to *act*—that these photographs present." What's left when the empathic imagination fails, or is blocked, is the uncomfortable delectation of a stunning image.

Capa's rough-and-ready pictures soften this awareness of belatedness. An *echt*-Capa shot encodes the photographer as participant, physically present at the scene he is covering and therefore a comrade of the people he represents, vulnerable as they are to gunfire or whatever else goes on; insofar as the photographer is our conduit into a pictured situation, we participate vicariously rather than voyeuristically. In Paris in the 1930s, Capa and Chim photographed left-wing Popular Front demonstrations. "There is a feeling of zesty pleasure" in their pictures, Linfield muses; "one can almost hear the singing of songs, feel the pounding of feet, and sense the building atmosphere of excitement and hope." In the lush, hieratic images Nachtwey makes, and to a lesser extent in the fragmented, syncopated prints by Peress, this open invitation to events shuts down. Our sense of photojournalists as partisans morphs into a sense of the photographers, and hence ourselves, as irremediably remote. One can understand this as a principled refusal of too-easy identification; it may well be a pleasure, for politically woebegone American leftists in 2010, to imagine that we are demonstrating with the Popular Front, but in reality we are no more intimate with those crowds than we

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are with Memuna and her dad. More problematic, the handsomely polished photojournalistic image may suggest a rejection of spontaneity and an incapacity to identify with a beleaguered Other. (Nachtwey has been injured more than once in the field. There is, of course, no impenetrable scrim between him and his subjects; the pictures just look as if there were.)

Linfield is alert to such shades of gray. But it is here that her nostalgia for liberal-humanist, democratic-revolutionary photojournalism filters in. Capa, she writes, "admired good fighters who defended good causes…his pictures document those invaluable times when politics encompassed freedom and solidarity, individuality and brotherhood." This sense that Capa photographed "good" revolutions reflects, in part, his mobilization of time-honored iconographic cues, which Linfield of course understands; all the same, she slips freely from discussion of visual motifs to sweeping statements about nonphotographic reality:

> Capa, despite all his innovations, was working within a centuries-long tradition of the West in which the slaughter of innocents, and those who defended them, represented ideals of religious purity, bravery, patriotism, political principle, or sacrifice for others. In the photographs of James Nachtwey, we see what happens when…the atrocities they so nakedly depict are almost completely divorced from religious, political, or historical redemption.

With questions of iconographic potency versus historical veracity on the table, I was surprised to find that Linfield never mentions a well-known controversy regarding what she calls "the classic war image, as well as the classic antiwar image, of the twentieth century," the photograph known as *The Falling Soldier* (1936). For almost thirty years, allegations that Capa had staged this shot of a man collapsing, his arms flung out in Christlike abandon, swirled through critical literature. In 2002 Capa's biographer Richard Whelan submitted evidence that *The Falling Soldier* captures a Loyalist militiaman named Federico Borrell García at the moment of his death. Predictably, debate has not been quelled; doubts about the location pictured in the photo were raised by a Spanish researcher in 2009. Perhaps Linfield wanted to avoid restaging a he said/she said discussion. All the same, as with her decision not to dwell on *Without Sanctuary*, her choice to account neither for the controversy nor her reticence about it bewilders me.

The hint of hagiography tingeing Linfield's Capa chapter links to her wider assertion that

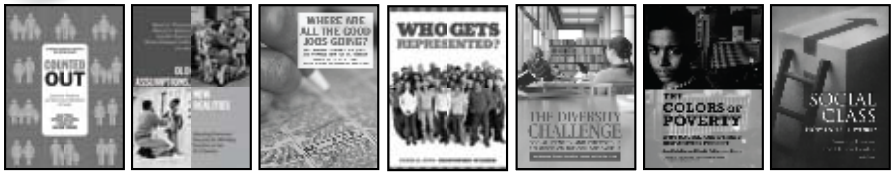
> something has changed in the nature of war. The ideologically based conflicts that characterized the 1930s, World War II, and the subsequent anticolonial wars of independence (and that distinguished virtually all revolutions dating back to the eighteenth century) are far less prevalent—or, in some cases, have lost whatever ideological raison d'être they once possessed.

Conventional wars, she continues, have been replaced by

> other kinds of conflict that we might call wars of disintegration. Such conflicts are expressions not of imperial expansion, national liberation, socialist revolution, or even fascist counterrevolution, but are more akin to auto-exterminations.

Other analysts—including the Australian political theorist John Keane, whose phrase "uncivil wars" Linfield borrows—have advanced similar arguments. This facet of Linfield's thesis, however, did not feel well integrated into other aspects of her book. Is

RSF SOCIAL SCIENCE THAT MATTERS



COUNTED OUT
Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family
Brian Powell, Catherine Bolzendahl, Claudia Geist, and Lala Carr Steelman
Based on a ground-breaking survey, *Counted Out* examines how Americans really define family and demonstrates that the definition is becoming more expansive over time.
$39.95 cloth September 2010

OLD ASSUMPTIONS, NEW REALITIES
Ensuring Economic Security for Working Families in the 21st Century
Robert D. Plotnick, Maria K. Meyers, Jennifer Romich, and Steven Rathgeb Smith, editors
Identifies the tensions between twentieth-century realities for working Americans and offers promising new reforms for ensuring social and economic security.
$39.95 cloth December 2010

WHERE ARE ALL THE GOOD JOBS GOING?
What National and Local Job Quality and Dynamics Mean for U.S. Workers
Harry J. Holzer, Julia I. Lane, David B. Rosenblum, and Fredrik Andersson
Addresses whether the U.S. labor market can still produce jobs with good pay and benefits for the majority of workers and whether these jobs can remain stable over time.
$24.95 paper January 2011

WHO GETS REPRESENTED?
Peter K. Enns and Christopher Wlezien, editors
Analyzes differences across income, education, racial, and partisan groups to investigate whether and how differences in group opinion matter with regard to political representation.
$45.00 paper January 2011

THE DIVERSITY CHALLENGE
Social Identity and Intergroup Relations on the College Campus
Jim Sidanius, Shana Levin, Collette van Laar, and David O. Sears
"[Sidanius et al.] provide us with compelling new insights regarding the benefits and challenges of diverse academic environments."
—Linda R. Tropp, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
$24.95 paper October 2010

THE COLORS OF POVERTY
Why Racial and Ethnic Disparities Persist
Ann Chih Lin and David R. Harris, editors
"[The editors] bring together a stellar roster of scholars to argue that racial inequality...[stems] from multiple disadvantages that cumulate over time."
—Douglas S. Massey, the Woodrow Wilson School
$24.95 paper September 2010

SOCIAL CLASS
How Does It Work?
Annette Lareau and Dalton Conley, editors
"[*Social Class*] is a vital resource for working through the nebulous concept of social class to observe and measure it in the real world."
—*Canadian Journal of Sociology*
$24.95 paper August 2010

JUST SCHOOLS
Pursuing Equality in Societies of Difference
Martha Minow, Richard A. Shweder, and Hazel Rose Markus, editors
"*Just Schools* reminds us that deeper reflection and debate about aims [of education] is required, especially in a society as diverse as ours."
—Stanton Wortham, University of Pennsylvania
$23.95 paper November 2010

Russell Sage Foundation
112 East 64th Street
New York, NY 10065

At bookstores now, or call 1-800-524-6401; visit us on the web at www.russellsage.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the insane sadism of the RUF in Sierra Leone in the 1990s wholly incomparable to the insane sadism of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in the '70s, or that of the Third Reich in Europe in the '30s and '40s? Linfield proffers a compelling comparison of the Cultural Revolution in China and the war in Sierra Leone vis-à-vis the special susceptibility of children to regimes preaching mercilessness; she quotes the critic Richard Lacayo, who says of Nachtwey's collection *Inferno* (1999) that "in the post–cold war world, 'history is still being made the old-fashioned way, with land mines and machetes.'" Are these similarities, paradoxically, also stark oppositions? I do not mean to quibble, but Linfield is making a large claim about contemporary armed conflict. In a book about photography, it is hard—perhaps impossible—to include the breadth and depth of research and analysis that would ground this claim more subtly. "We, the viewers, must look outside the frame," Linfield states, and she is emphatically right. The photojournalistic practices she examines cannot be well understood in isolation from the hostilities they track, and it speaks to Linfield's ambition as a scholar that she entertains this level of inquiry. Nevertheless, this part of *The Cruel Radiance* left me with more questions than it answered.

New from Seagull Books

My Father, the Germans and I
Essays, Lectures, Interviews
Jürek Becker
Edited by **Christine Becker**
Jürek Becker (1937–97) is best known for his novel *Jacob the Liar*, but he also wrote nonfiction. The essays, lectures, and interviews in this collection share a common thread in that they each speak to Becker's interactions with and opinions on the social, political, and cultural conditions of East, West, and unified Germany.
Cloth $24.95

Nationalism and the Imagination
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak analyzes the creation of Indian sovereignty in 1947 and the tone of Indian nationalism, bound up with class and religion, that arose in its wake. She was five years old when independence was declared, and she vividly writes: *"These are my earliest memories: Famine and blood on the streets."*
Cloth $15.00

WHAT WAS COMMUNISM?

Bait
Four Stories
Mahasweta Devi
Translated and with an Introduction by **Sumanta Banerjee**
Unlike most of Mahasweta Devi's works, which focus on Bengali tribes and the rural dispossessed, the four stories collected in *Bait* are located in the urban and suburban criminal underworld, and form an unusual segment of Devi's oeuvre.
Cloth $17.00

Change
Mo Yan
Translated by **Howard Goldblatt**
Mo Yan—China's foremost novelist—personalizes the political and social changes in his country over the past few decades in a novella disguised as autobiography (or vice-versa). By moving back and forth in time and focusing on small events and everyday people, Yan breathes life into history by describing the effects of larger-than-life events on the average citizen.
Cloth $15.00

Distributed by the University of Chicago Press • www.press.uchicago.edu

It also gave me pause regarding Linfield's discussion, in particular, of Nachtwey. She comments, for instance, that "Nachtwey's subjects are, more often than not, severely deformed through various forms of violence, and they seem disconnected from history and politics." This claim follows from the idea of a fundamental distinction between old "ideological" war and new "disintegrative" war. However, as a statement about the subjects in Nachtwey's portraits, it strikes me as wrong. Famine, AIDS, car bombings and sniper fire are not transhistorical forces sculpting human bodies into totems of annihilation. The emaciated and bereaved people in Nachtwey's pictures are obviously radically disenfranchised. But still—therefore—they seem to me like embodiments of history and politics: of postcolonial violence and exploitation, ecological disaster, ethnic hatreds, religious intolerance, epidemic and intractable struggles over land and water rights in an increasingly desertified and polluted world. If these people look like timeless figures on a frieze, it is because Nachtwey photographs them that way.

Questions about the nature of contemporary war and ideology, and conflicting definitions of modernity, are too big to sort out in a book like *The Cruel Radiance*. Is modernity a liberal-democratic concept exclusive to secular, Western, capitalist-technological societies? What term would we use, then, to name what has been going on for the past 100 or more years in the rest of the world?

These are certainly questions too complex to handle thoroughly in a review, so I fall back on a description already in place. One definition of modernity is that it is photographic. There is a Nachtwey image showing two women, fully veiled, who are having their portrait taken in a photographer's studio in Kabul in 2002. Linfield says she finds it—the photograph, but by extension also the situation captured in it—"hilarious":

> Who would have thought that feudal Afghanistan would produce a postmodern joke? Yet here we have it: the portrait—that great document of individual expressiveness—recreated here, without a face.

The James Nachtwey Studio denied permission to reproduce his work in *The Cruel Radiance*, but I found the Kabul picture online (micr.ch/d/exhib/explore_archives_war2_d.html). The photographer's studio is small, papered with colorful, mural-sized backdrops of what look like paradisiacal villas and gardens; presumably clients can choose which they want in their photo. Two standing lights rhyme with the stand-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing women; as Linfield notes, a poster hung against the backdrops shows a glamorous model in incongruous décolleté. The two women are not identically dressed: one's blue burqa is decorated with white embroidery; the other's is plainer. The garments hang down like capes at the back and sides but end at the waist in front, revealing that both women wear baggy black trousers; the one in the embroidered veil wears white boots or leggings, and her right hand peeks from the decorated edge of the wrap that conceals her face.

They "stand upright, with seeming pride," as Linfield observes. So presumably these women consider the experience of being photographed meaningful, and understand the image they present to the lens as eloquent of something they wish to express. Elsewhere in *The Cruel Radiance*, Linfield comments, "Photographs—especially portraits, though not only they—demand that we encounter the individual qua individual: precisely what totalitarian ideologies forbid." This is a more convincing formulation of the assumption about the relationship between portraits and the soul. She also describes the burqa as "a grotesque, indeed totalitarian garment." Would I argue? I could never defend the burqa, embroidered or otherwise. I do, however, want to think about those women's ability—even under a totalitarian, misogynist regime—to see themselves, as they understand themselves, in the mundane and crazy mirror that is a photograph. The delicate negotiation between concealment and display, cultural piety and cultural experiment, suggested in Nachtwey's image does not appear to me comical, or divorced from political history. On the contrary, it seems that if we, as Linfield's readers, are amazed to find "postmodernism" in Kabul in 2002, then our definition of the postmodern is too narrow.

"We are in a tension between the speed of history—which happens very, very fast—and progress, which happens very, very slowly," wrote Gilles Peress in 1999, in a passage Linfield cites. As if answering Agee's yearning to plunge into the "immediate world" with "weaponless consciousness," Peress's judgment bespeaks the double difficulty of trying to assess photographs that help to make history while history unspools at breathtaking speed. *The Cruel Radiance* is not the last word in how to comprehend photography and political violence. But it is a dense and demanding attempt at comprehension—and besides, such a last word cannot be written, any more than a shutter can click on the definitive photograph. ■

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Car two of *Jesus Christ Super Star*, by Lee Quiñones, on an IRT Lexington Avenue line No. 5 train, New York City, 1977

Burning Down the House

by SAMUEL ZIPP

Ed Koch and the Rebuilding of New York City
By Jonathan Soffer.
Columbia. 494 pp. $34.95.

The Fires
How a Computer Formula, Big Ideas, and the Best of Intentions Burned Down New York City—and Determined the Future of Cities.
By Joe Flood.
Riverhead. 325 pp. $26.95.

In Michael Bloomberg's New York City, it has become fashionable to look back with fondness on the metropolis of the late 1970s and early '80s, before chain stores and "broken windows" policing, when graffiti-spattered trains went all-city and loose joints could be had around every corner. Fat laces and Kangol hats; "token entry" and the last of the Automats; postpunk and hip-hop uptown and down. The city was more real then, the story goes, more free; the place still had soul. Several years ago no less an authority on Gotham lore than Luc Sante—the author of *Low Life*, a beguiling account of the city's nineteenth-century "lures and snares"—lent literary credence to this current of nostalgia in an essay called "My Lost City." Sante summoned vivid memories of 1978, when he and some friends "drifted down from the Upper West Side to the Lower East Side," enthralled by a locale that "felt depopulated even in daylight." They lived cheap, worked little and, suspended in that "stage of youth when… your moment is the only one on the clock," indulged in "a certain lassitude" that seemed suited to the surrounding desolation. Sante writes of the publication, that same year, of Rem Koolhaas's *Delirious New York*, with its heady celebration of the city's utopian promise, its skyscraper soul "permanently set in the future." For Sante, though, living in "a ruin in the making," the book "seemed like an archaeological reverie, an evocation of the hubris and ambition of a dead city." His New York was no fantasy city of aerial walkways and dirigible mooring masts; he reveled and trembled in a dreamscape of vacant blocks and decadent glamour, whose ruins told a story of modernity derailed.

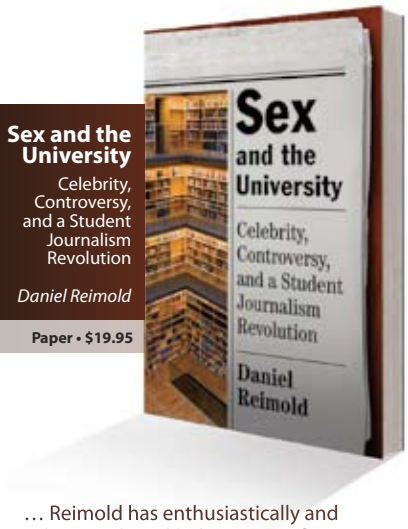
Further downtown the ruins spoke of dread. Ed Koch, taking office as mayor that winter, found a city in frightening disarray. Bridges and streets were crumbling. People feared the sidewalks and parks after dark. Thousands of apartment buildings stood abandoned, and night after night an epidemic of fires reduced more of their number to rubble and ash. Making matters worse, as historian Jonathan Soffer tells us in *Ed Koch and the Rebuilding of New York City*, the new mayor had scant resources at his disposal. In hock to the financiers and banks that had reluctantly rescued the city from bankruptcy several years earlier, New York couldn't borrow money, and years of imposed fiscal austerity had taken their toll on government services. Employees were disillusioned and corrupt. Marred by leaks and water damage, municipal offices were, according to Koch's transition director, of "third world quality." With city records a mess and computer databases outdated and unreliable, good information was scarce. Disorder reigned. Faith in the urban experiment—the idea that people

Samuel Zipp teaches American and urban studies at Brown University and is the author of Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS

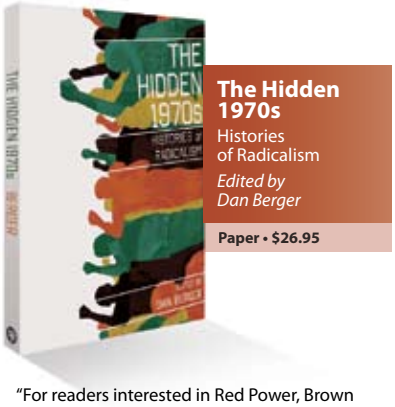
"Move over, Carrie Bradshaw…



Sex and the University
Celebrity, Controversy, and a Student Journalism Revolution
Daniel Reimold
Paper • $19.95

… Reimold has enthusiastically and exhaustively tackled our erotic fixation with the college sex columnist. He adeptly lives up to his reputation as the preeminent authority on college paper sex scribes with a work that is sure to instigate even more discourse—and debate—on this highly controversial topic."

—Yvonne K. Fulbright, author of *Sultry Sex Talk to Seduce Any Lover*



The Hidden 1970s
Histories of Radicalism
Edited by Dan Berger
Paper • $26.95

"For readers interested in Red Power, Brown Power, women's liberation, peace movements, queer politics, and the white left, this important volume offers new perspectives and information that is not available elsewhere. The essays, by a mix of emerging scholars and scholar-activists, offer views of the recent past that should reshape the consensus about the 1970s to focus on activism, organizing, and violence from above and below."

—Felicia Kornbluh, author of *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America*

Available at bookstores, online retailers, & **rutgerspress.rutgers.edu • 800-848-6224**

from all walks of life, from everywhere, could live together in cities—was at its nadir.

Ironically, the shambles Koch inherited was partly the consequence of a misguided effort to bring order to city governance through technology and systems analysis. As Joe Flood explains in *The Fires*, Koch's predecessor John Lindsay had hired a team of consultants from the RAND Corporation, the California think tank that would guide Robert McNamara's war effort in Vietnam, to help modernize municipal service delivery. Applying their formulas and processing power to the New York City Fire Department, the RAND "whiz kids" recommended a thorough overhaul of station location strategy. Their advice would have tragic consequences. The city instituted service cuts and reallocations, but far from achieving the hoped-for efficiencies, the cuts created dangerously unprotected spots in the South Bronx, East New York and the Lower East Side, all poor, minority neighborhoods ravaged by housing abandonment. Mayor Lindsay's experiment in systems analysis, Flood says, "burned down New York City."

Reading Flood alongside Soffer might lead one to think that the Democrat Koch's well-known drift to the right was an unequivocal reaction to the failures of technocratic, can-do liberalism. If Lindsay and his successor Abe Beame had spent, analyzed and planned the city into fiscal and social crisis, then Koch turned to free-market "neoliberalism"—the Marxist term of art employed by Soffer—and cultivated alliances with social conservatives in the outer boroughs to rebuild a city in pieces and rejuvenate its ambition. Thankfully, Flood and Soffer don't depend on but round out that well-worn, market-friendly narrative. Soffer places Koch's notorious rightward swing in welcome historical and biographical context, while Flood anchors the story of RAND's misadventures in a nuanced account of a city imperiled by forces more pervasive than the familiar right-wing boogeyman of big government.

Flood begins his story of technological hubris with a pointed bit of mythbusting. Histories of New York's agonies in the 1970s have long relied on the idea that an epidemic of arson destroyed the city. And yet, Flood suggests, "for all its ubiquity, the arson story is ultimately fiction." Arson did become more prevalent during the '70s, particularly in poorer neighborhoods like the South Bronx, but at its peak in the late '70s arson accounted for less than 7 percent of fires in the five boroughs, and most of the deliberately set fires—whether the work of calculating landlords, disgruntled residents or antisocial miscreants—afflicted buildings that were already abandoned. It was in the early '70s that the city was crippled by conflagration, as a wave of conventional fires "spread over the poorer quarters of the city like a contagion." The vast damage from these blazes was avoidable, but in the midst of the fire years Mayor Lindsay ordered the closing of thirty-four of the busiest engine-and-ladder companies in the city, leaving scarred neighborhoods helpless in the face of fires accidental and malicious.

Why would Lindsay order cuts in obviously imperiled areas? This question propels *The Fires*, and the absence of a simple answer gives the story its considerable drama. When Lindsay took office in 1966, he faced the first stirrings of the social tempest that would test Koch. Rising crime, overburdened infrastructure, racial tension and a general sense of ennui made New York City the most noteworthy representative of a larger "urban crisis" said to be engulfing the nation. In fact, Lindsay's supporters at the *New York Herald Tribune* had eagerly promoted this story line with a prominent election-season series called "A City in Crisis," which all but anointed the Upper East Side Congressman and liberal Republican as Gotham's savior. Upon taking office Lindsay resolved to restore confidence in urban governance.

Lindsay was what Flood calls a "moralizing crusader." He hoped to unseat the old Tammany political machine, which had kept Democrats in power with a finely calibrated exchange of favors and services for votes greased by pervasive graft, and which rewarded loyal white ethnics with patronage while paying lip service to the concerns of the low-income migrants arriving in ever greater numbers from the black American South and Puerto Rico. At the same time, Lindsay promised to master the chaos of the city by applying the technological marvels of computerization to city service delivery. Systems analysis, game theory, computer modeling: these RAND innovations in information management promised to give Lindsay's administration a way to turn the constant stream of information coursing through city agencies into "easily defined variables." Perhaps most important, though, was Lindsay's sense that RAND would give him an advantage over the Tammany machine. Flood ingeniously describes Tammany as an "information-gathering apparatus." As much pragmatic "intelligence network" as craven patronage machine, the system ran on the stories collected on the street and sent up the ladder

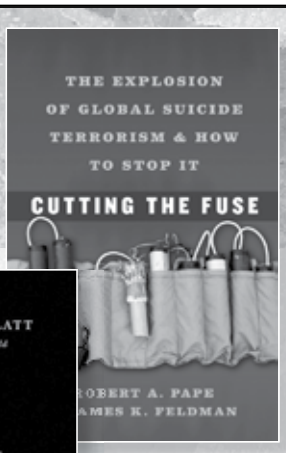
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the ward boss to the Democratic Party clubhouse to City Hall. Reformers had often struggled to deliver on their promises of good government because they lacked the machine's intelligence network. Lindsay counted on RAND to supply an equivalent information system that would shift the power base "from using narrative to using numbers." With total information awareness, the city could be turned "into an assemblage of numbers," a series of inputs and outputs that would easily surpass Tammany in the efficiency department. If Lindsay's moral vision would be his political undoing—spurring the conservative backlash upon which Koch would later capitalize—his technocratic high-handedness, Flood argues, would be the city's downfall.

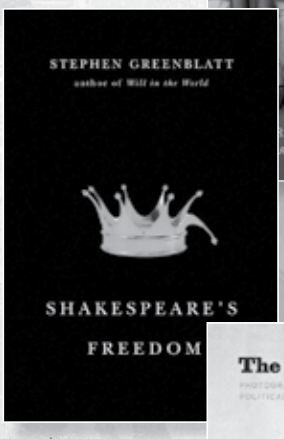
RAND worked with several municipal agencies, but the planners found their most willing partner in Lindsay's fire chief, John O'Hagan, who smoothed the way for them in a bureaucracy that was notoriously chilly to outsiders, particularly those who came bearing formulas and data. Firefighters were suspicious of the quest for "efficiency," which meant two things to them and their union: station closings and job cuts. O'Hagan, however, did not fear efficiency. An iconoclast in a culture that prized conformity, he had become the youngest chief in FDNY history by impressing Lindsay with his fondness for innovation. An expert in the emerging science of fighting skyscraper blazes, O'Hagan encouraged or developed a number of safety measures still in use by the FDNY today, such as infrared sensors for detecting fire behind walls, eye shields, lightweight air masks and an early version of the "jaws of life," a metal-cutting saw for extricating people from crashed cars. One of O'Hagan's favorite writers was the management theorist Peter Drucker.

Pressed by Lindsay to find savings in a time of declining budgets, O'Hagan relished the chance to "do more with less." He was as determined as Lindsay to prove that systems analysis would save money and improve fire service. The RAND analysts dove into the problem, working to create computer models that showed where and how frequently fires happened and how quickly particular fire companies responded, data that would serve as a guide to the most efficient firefighting policy. Their calculations were based not on how busy companies were, or how many fires they fought, but instead on the variable of "response time," or how long it took for companies to get from the firehouse to a fire.

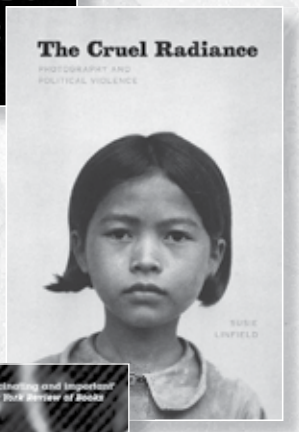
from chicago
Fall books



CUTTING THE FUSE
The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It
Robert A. Pape and **James K. Feldman**
One of Huffington Post's Best Social and Political Awareness Books of 2010
"I commend this book to both scholars and policy makers with a serious interest in US national security policy."
—Lee H. Hamilton, Co-Chair of the 9/11 Commission
Cloth $30.00

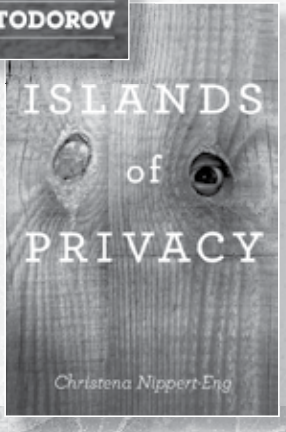


SHAKESPEARE'S FREEDOM
Stephen Greenblatt
With the elegance and verve for which he is well known, Stephen Greenblatt explores how Shakespeare was strikingly averse to absolutes and constantly explored the possibility of freedom from them.
Cloth $24.00



THE CRUEL RADIANCE
Photography and Political Violence
Susie Linfield
"A somber, heartfelt plea for readers to see the truth and acknowledge and understand the consequences of humans' potential for inhumanity."
—*Library Journal*
Cloth $30.00

THE FEAR OF BARBARIANS
Beyond the Clash of Civilizations
Tzvetan Todorov
"Fascinating and important. . . . Now, of all times, there is a need for cool heads, such as Todorov, who approaches the limits of free speech with admirable dexterity."
—Ian Buruma, *New York Review of Books*, on the French edition
Cloth $27.50



ISLANDS OF PRIVACY
Christena E. Nippert-Eng
"The strength of Nippert-Eng's closely detailed approach is that it allows us to see that privacy is a complicated value subject to constant change, pressure, defense, and negation. The book is also elegantly written—in admirable Studs Terkel fashion, Nippert-Eng is able to get people to tell some *great* stories about the things that interest us all."
—John Gilliom, Ohio University
Paper $22.50

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS WWW.PRESS.UCHICAGO.EDU

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But response time, Flood demonstrates, is a faulty guide to the real practice of firefighting. A more accurate and complex measure is the time that elapses between leaving the station house and starting to fight a fire. The only advantage to studying response time is that it can be easily quantified. And so RAND gave fire lieutenants stopwatches and asked them to record their travel time. But RAND, pressed to deliver results to Lindsay quickly, handed out watches to just fifteen companies, only one of which was in the fire-ravaged Bronx. Compounding the problem of small sample size was a rash of sabotage the planners should have expected, given the resistance they had already faced. Some suspicious firefighters fudged data, "lost" the watches or "accidentally" drove over them with their rigs. Worst of all, Flood argues, the supposedly hardheaded analysts let political considerations infect their models. Knowing that stable, well-connected neighborhoods—with lower fire rates, of course—would not stand for service cuts, RAND planners skewed their process to ensure that their recommendations would not unduly affect those areas. The final result was a perfect storm of error: analysts enamored of their models and officials desperate to trim expenses at all costs endorsed a program of closings and reshufflings that unduly affected hard-pressed poor neighborhoods and left them vulnerable to the mounting surge of blazes.

Flood overreaches a bit with his conclusion that New York was pillaged by "the paternalistic liberalism of can-do interventionism," with its top-down, technocratic rage for "order and stability." After all, the "war years" of the early and late 1970s would likely have tested the best-prepared fire department. To his credit, though, Flood grounds the story of RAND, Lindsay and O'Hagan in a wealth of urban history, showing how a century of moralistic reform, urban renewal, redlining, suburbanization and deindustrialization—all of which resulted, at least in part, from similar high-handed efforts at planning the fate of cities—left neighborhoods like the South Bronx filled with deteriorating, overcrowded buildings that were tinder for the fires to come.

Flood is right to note that liberals like Lindsay had grown perilously detached from the day-to-day life of their most important constituents, working-class city dwellers. Conventional wisdom suggests that liberalism's top-down impulses led not only to New York's death by fire but its fiscal immolation as well. The "tax-and-spend liberalism of activist civil service unions and no-questions-asked welfare" was said to have pushed the city into bankruptcy. However, as Flood demonstrates, postwar liberalism also channeled public resources to private capital, not just "big government." Building on recent scholarship, Flood shows how New York's fiscal crisis had multiple sources. If debts accrued by social welfare programs and corrupt municipal budgets dominated the headlines, a longer history of corporate welfare—in the form of real estate tax exemptions for office construction, subsidy programs for upscale developer-built housing and white-collar urban renewal—had fatally undermined the city's industrial economy and its long-term tax base.

Would Flood's subtle and telling account of liberalism's impact on New York and its less heralded role in the fiscal crisis have benefited Ed Koch when he took office? Jonathan Soffer reminds us early on in *Ed Koch and the Rebuilding of New York City* that "no mayor could solve the larger problems" of the era—particularly "the naturalization of a so-called free-market regime that was designed to camouflage the enrichment of the rich at everyone else's expense." But Koch never sought to contest that "naturalization." Understandably, perhaps, given the economic disaster he had inherited, the mayor chose to harness free-market ideology and make it the vehicle of the city's recovery. He spent the majority of his first two terms

Epitaph for Ben Sonnenberg

But still!
being but a tree
one cannot ask them
pines touched by his sleeve's passing
where to go
I know not
when he was buried
glancing over the land
going up that road
("to wait for a faraway person" sounding like the word for "pines")
under the pines
when spring came along the road
my beloved prince
he will have been perfect
while the shining days are piled up
how strangely awful
to utter it
on the death and burial of one prince
this is a song.
This is a song on the death and burial of one prince
to utter it how strangely awful
while the shining days are piled up
he will have been perfect my beloved prince
when spring came along the road under the pines
(the word for "pines" sounding like the word "to wait for a faraway person")
going up that road, glancing over the land
when he was buried
I know not where to go
pines touched by his sleeve's passing one cannot ask them
being but a tree, but still!

ANNE CARSON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

struggling to claw a way back from the fiscal crisis. He succeeded, but within the terms of "the new laissez-faire order" emerging all around him; the recovery was largely a solidification of the ongoing "shift in New York City's political economy, away from a manufacturing center with a welfare-state orientation to one dominated by neoliberalism," Soffer writes. Koch presided over, and even came to personify, a sea change in New York life. During his three terms he "convinced most New Yorkers of the legitimacy of a new neoliberal order that subsidized Manhattan business development, particularly in the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors." In this light, a better title for Soffer's book would have been *Ed Koch and the Transformation of New York City*.

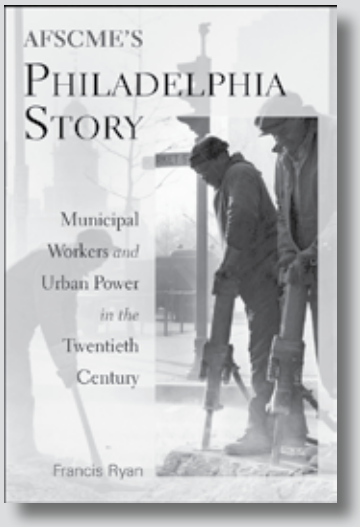
The problem, for both Koch and the city, was that, as Soffer aptly puts it, "neoliberalism has mainly concentrated rather than created wealth." The inequality that Koch's policies perpetuated and deepened would undermine his mayoralty. The austerity measures he implemented did end up balancing the books and restoring the city's credit in the bond markets, but by his third term they had bred homelessness, crime, public disorder, inequality, racial upheaval, infrastructure distress, crack violence and AIDS-related public-health unrest. The mayor hoped that by righting the city's fiscal ship and underwriting a white-collar corporate office boom, he would earn enough leverage to pursue more traditional liberal social goals. He was mistaken. As Soffer puts it, "Koch's procorporate policies made the rich richer, even though he tried (though with less success) to avoid making the poor poorer." New York under Ed Koch came back to life, but as a different city, one where private entities like the Central Park Conservancy made decisions over public parks, real estate developers enjoyed a raft of government entitlements and Wall Street ascended to the symbolic perch from which it has only lately been dislodged.

Conventional wisdom on the left has long had it that Koch as mayor was a lapsed progressive, bewitched by the Gordon Gekko spirit of the 1980s. He had risen through the ranks of the reformist, anti-boss Village Independent Democrats and marched "down South" for civil rights. How could he betray such a legacy? Soffer, however, contends that Koch's pragmatic liberalism owed more to an abiding skepticism of radicalism than to immediate political expediency or lust for power. Raised in the Bronx, Newark and Brooklyn, the son of a lower-middle-class striver in the fur industry, Koch learned early on to distrust what he would later call the "radical far left." He saw himself as "democratic left"—anticommunist and antifascist, pro–civil rights and civil liberties, hawkish on foreign policy, resolute in support of Israel, comfortable with capitalism. It was, Soffer rightly argues, "not a surprising attitude for someone in his class position, scion of a hardworking liberal Jewish family grasping at the lower rung of the middle class, headed by a small boss outside the self-assured solidarity of the communist-led furriers' union." Koch, Soffer insists, "never transformed into a conservative upon becoming mayor.... His liberalism and its limits were both remarkably consistent."

The biographical point is well-taken, but it obscures the wily political animal that Soffer elsewhere sees in Koch. Perhaps the mayor did have a consistent worldview, but he was a "liberal" who found a way to support Ronald Reagan over Jimmy Carter and endorse George W. Bush over John Kerry. Koch might argue that it wasn't he who had changed; it was other liberals. His "moderation" and "pragmatism" were especially useful in instances where he needed to align himself with those in power and against those whose underdog status he refused to respect. Koch would play the maverick card when he needed to look tough standing up to communism or terrorism, but would assume the "liberal with sanity" role if it helped him look more reasonable than rivals from his own side, like Jesse Jackson and Bella Abzug, his fellow New York Congressional delegate in the early 1970s. Koch's talent seems to have been to direct his longstanding suspicion of radicalism into the political channels that would best serve his aspirations.

Koch used the "reformer" label to secure a foothold in city politics in the 1960s, but courted Democratic bosses when his ambitions had outgrown the Village. He marched for civil rights but catered to the white ethnic outer-borough backlash when it was clear that railing against the welfare state was the path to citywide power. These moves made political sense, but they also led to the blowback that sank his final term. His rapprochement with outer-borough party leaders led to a series of corruption scandals, including a scourge of kickbacks, bribery and extortion in the city's Parking Violations Bureau, whose chief was a functionary installed by Koch at the bosses' request. The scandals jeopardized Koch's reputation

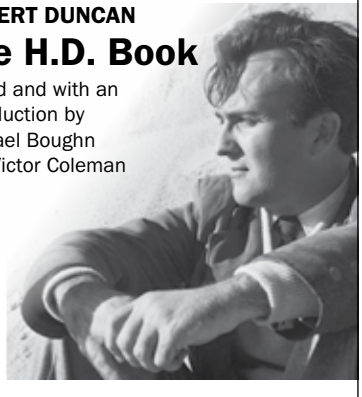
A HISTORY OF THE LARGEST UNION IN THE AFL-CIO



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY PRESS
www.temple.edu/tempress
Available at your favorite bookseller

An unprecedented exploration of modern poetry by one of America's most acclaimed poets

ROBERT DUNCAN
The H.D. Book
Edited and with an Introduction by Michael Boughn and Victor Coleman



"This lovingly prepared volume presents this long critical work...in its full form for the first time."
—*Publishers Weekly*, Starred Review

At bookstores or www.ucpress.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for restoring good government to City Hall, but it was his appeals to conservative white voters that left him powerless to defuse the racial strife of the 1980s.

The new mayor telegraphed his priorities in his first inaugural address. In a speech that Soffer labels "more subtle than brilliant," Koch stressed only two specific goals. Of all the issues that dogged New York in the winter of 1978—fiscal crisis, crime, drugs, housing abandonment, arson—Koch chose to call for the reform of poverty programs and the gentrification of the city's neighborhoods. Here was the mayor's agenda in black and white, literally. "In the past," he declared, "programs that were meant to help the needy ended up as bonanzas for the greedy." Under Koch, the community-based agencies that served working-class and poor African-Americans and Latinos would face direct mayoral control of their aid programs, while a new generation of what Koch hailed as "urban pioneers" would enjoy incentives and tax abatements to underwrite their efforts to rehabilitate run-down housing stock. This was a thinly veiled message to the outer-borough voters he had previously courted, assuring them that he would work to circumscribe perceived minority threats to their hard-won and precarious station.

In the long run, however, it was not only white, middle-class gentrifiers who enjoyed the administration's favor. One of the few bright spots of Koch's third term was his affordable-housing program, which used city subsidies to open the private housing market to low-income homebuyers. Community-based organizations willing to abandon the blueprint of the War on Poverty and embrace market-friendly policies received funding to rebuild stretches of burned-out neighborhoods. In the South Bronx, groups like the African-American-led Banana Kelly Improvement Association and the Mid-Bronx Desperadoes used city money to rehabilitate apartments and build new homes on blocks charred by fires a decade earlier. Despite these achievements, Koch was never able to convince blacks and Latinos that he had their best interests at heart.

His problem was personal and political. Koch never felt the need to reach out to black leaders the way he did to party regulars. Many blacks saw his attacks on poverty programs and his turn to neoliberalism as biased, concerted efforts to undermine institutions that, however corrupt or mismanaged, were their best hope for rising from the ghetto into the middle class. Most of Koch's housing and community development policies did not bear fruit until late in his third term or after he had left Gracie Mansion, so the mayor was judged mostly on his insensitivity to the ways in which racism and segregation had limited possibilities for people of color. Like many liberals of his generation, he failed to appreciate the deeper structural inequalities still faced by blacks and Latinos after civil rights. As Soffer puts it, Koch "assumed the difficulties African Americans faced in ascending to the middle class in the 1970s and 1980s were the same difficulties that Jews had faced in the 1950s and 1960s; he discounted the considerable government assistance that he had received; and he assumed that legal changes had effectively wiped out the problem of discrimination."

Koch never felt the need to reach out to black leaders the way he did to party regulars.

These failures and blind spots left Koch ill equipped to handle the spate of racial incidents that tore apart New York in the 1980s. The mayor began the decade on the wrong foot by closing Harlem's Sydenham Hospital, despite its symbolic importance to the black community as the first private integrated hospital in the United States. A rash of police brutality cases—particularly the deaths of Michael Stewart and Eleanor Bumpurs—further strained frayed relations between blacks and the NYPD. Then, in 1984, a white straphanger named Bernhard Goetz opened fire with a revolver on four black teenagers who had approached him and demanded five dollars. Koch was initially outraged, announcing that "vigilantism will not be tolerated in this city," but he aggravated an inflamed situation by appearing to reverse himself, praising the grand jury's decision to indict Goetz on gun charges rather than attempted homicide. This stab at courting white outer-borough voters in an election year made Koch vulnerable to charges that he had helped to create an atmosphere in which racist violence would be tolerated. That impression only deepened in the turbulent late 1980s, when a series of heinous events—a group of "wilding" black kids were falsely accused of raping a white woman who came to be known as the "Central Park jogger"; a young black girl in the city's suburbs, Tawana Brawley, falsely claimed to have been raped by a group of white men; and gangs of whites attacked and brutalized blacks in Howard Beach, Queens, and Bensonhurst, Brooklyn—rattled the city and reinforced the sense that New York, for all its civil rights gains and its rebound from the fiscal and urban crises of the 1970s, was fatally riven by race, inequality and resentment.

Given the tumult of the era, Soffer's dedication to evenhandedness is remarkable, even if it sometimes leaves his account a touch bloodless. This is in part because Soffer has to confront the very same dilemma that faces the modern public executive. His narrative tacks between dutiful accounts of the details of municipal management—budgets, staffing upheaval, bureaucratic skirmishes—and the dogged tracking of each media event. Koch himself had to manage the intricate details of reviving the city while also weathering the more insistent and recurrent short-term crises kicked up by the accelerating pace of electronic press coverage. But as most New Yorkers beyond a certain age remember, Koch was never shy about inserting his boisterous ego and grinning mug into public life. He eagerly chased the news cycle and thrilled at seeing his name in the papers; he lived and died by the performances he gave at his frequent press conferences, and alternately charmed and outraged New Yorkers by mouthing off whenever the spirit took him. The "Mayatollah's" fondness for ersatz borough-bred kitsch—his ubiquitous "How'm I doin'?" for instance—gets its due here, but Soffer is sometimes hard-pressed to bring the same verve to the page that his subject brought to the mayoralty.

Soffer rightly describes Koch as a precursor to Bill Clinton–style "third way" moderation, a pioneer of the "Democratic party version of neoliberalism." Both Soffer and Flood make it plain that New York's tribulations in the 1970s and '80s set the political course of the nation. Flood ends his book with a tribute to the ordinary people who survived the "war years" in the South Bronx, name-checking not only Banana Kelly but also Grandmaster Flash, Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa. But while New York's nightmares may have been among the irritants and enigmas that provoked the cultural revolution of hip-hop, they also suggested, however simply or incompletely, that New York's experiment in urban liberalism was hopeless. Ed Koch internalized that lesson, and put it to work in governing New York City, ultimately legitimizing neoliberalism as a new road back to power for liberals burned by fire and fiscal crisis. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classified

To advertise in the classified section, contact amanda@thenation.com or call 212-209-5414. A fifteen word advertisement running three times in the classified section costs $247.50..

ANCIENT SECRETS

SCHOLARLY BOOKLET PROVES PISO (*aka* Josephus) invented fictional Jesus, Gospels. Amazing but incontrovertible. $15: Abelard, Box 5652 A, Kent, WA 98064.

BLOGS/WEB

GET GRANDPA'S FBI FILE.COM *Unless you ask, you'll never know…*

MEDITATIONS OF A BEDOUIN F-15 JET FIGHTER PILOT. alQasas.net.

BOOKS

THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS AND MARY MAGDALENE, revealed in beautifully illustrated children's book. $12. kgoete@verizon.net.

PERVERT: NOTES FROM THE SEXUAL UNDERGROUND—Intelligent, erotic perspectives by dominatrix/sex educator Nancy Ava Miller, M. Ed. Poems! Paragraphs! Pix! nancyava.com; (505) 255-9255.

FREE NOVEL/EASY DOWNLOAD: *Ruling Class Smackdown, the Novel, or, Hellfire Revenge* (316 pp). Hard-hitting fantasy on cutting the rulers of the world down to size with social class–driven activism. A scathing critique of US and Israeli power. Go to scribd.com—books fiction ("Ruling Class Smackdown").

HOUSING WANTED

POTENTIAL *NATION*, *HARPER'S*, *DEMOCRACY NOW!* intern seeking room & board in exchange for P/T services. alexanderkelly.wordpress.com.

LIBERAL LIAISONS

If responding to a Nation Box number, send replies to: Nation Box ___, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.

FETISHES AND FANTASIES fulfilled. Hot erotic talk with creative, sensuous woman. No limits. Personal. Confidential. Call (866) 844-8286.

AURAL EROTICA. Well-heeled, well-spoken, not always well-behaved. Fetish friendly, smart & sexy. (800) 717-LIZZ (5499); ElizabethPaxton.com.

WEST COAST MAN SEEKS WEST COAST WOMAN, well-read, well-spoken, not tall, for last, warm union in time. (250) 285-2169.

WIDOW IN WESTCHESTER, NY, seeks friendship with a man 77–87 who lives nearby and loves Mozart. fapoetry@verizon.net.

GENTLE, QUIET WIDOW. 70, petite. Enjoys outdoors, cultural and community events, gardening, reading, PBS, cooking, classical music, photography, eco-travel. Homeowner, under-consumer. Almost non-computerized. Seeks gentleman, 68-plus with similar interests, to share companionable, slower-paced lifestyle. Reply Nation Box 862.

MERCHANDISE

CAT LOVERS AGAINST THE BOMB 2011 wall calendar $8.95 + $1.75 postage. Cats and peace—what more could you want in a calendar? Order from: CLAB-NC, PO Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501; or toll-free (877) 778-3434; or catcal@aol.com.

EXCITING NEW DESSERT: HALF-BAKED ALASKA cafepress.com/sarahsapron.

CAN YOU GET HEALTHCARE COVERAGE FOR A PALINOSCOPY? cafepress.com/palinoscopy.

DOES YOUR SUPERMARKET CARRY GOLDMAN SNACKS CHEATOS? cafepress.com/goldmansnacks.

MERCHANDISE

Talk Back Tees

Liberal quotations, wit & wisdom, hand-printed on colorful, 100% cotton tees

talkbacktees.com (800) 777-9242

PSYCHOTHERAPY

CHICAGO PSYCHOTHERAPIST, twenty-five years, all issues, including depression, anxiety, relationships, creative blocks. Sliding scale, insurance. Deborah Hellerstein, PhD. (312) 409-9516; therapyinchicago.com.

REAL ESTATE

LEFT COAST, US. Work with The Realtor Who's on Your Side. Norma J.F. Harrison. (510) 526-3968. (866) 264-9029. NormaHa@pacbell.net.

SANTA FE: PROGRESSIVE REALTOR® seeks same in clients. Peter Kahn, Santa Fe Realty Partners. (505) 690-4840 cell, (877) 982-6207 toll free, or peter@peterkahn.com.

DOME HOME: Duluth, Minnesota. 3.8 acres. New septic and well, garden, wood-burning stove and conventional heat source. $129,900. (218) 728-2991.

UNUSUAL SERVICES

PRE-NEED OBITUARIES. Are you dying to write your own obituary? Get help from a professional "ghostwriter." Or would you rather your kids have the last word? obitwriter.net.

GOVERNMENT ATTIC.ORG *Cool Declassified Documents.*

Events

NATIONAL

Economy Connection

■ War and global capitalism. Unemployment and recession. Wealth, poverty and inequality. For speakers and resources on these and related topics, contact Economy Connection, a project of the Union for Radical Political Economics. We can provide speakers for formal or informal events sponsored by community groups, unions, high schools, colleges or political organizations. soapbox@urpe.org or (201) 792-7459. Join URPE! • urpe.org. (413) 577-0806. URPE@labornet.org.

NEW YORK

Concerned About the World?

■ Learn transmission meditation. Simple. Powerful. Effective. Transmission meditation is a group service activity that aids in the distribution of potent spiritual energies. Simple to learn, nonsectarian, never a fee. Only heartfelt aspiration and the desire to serve are needed. Free introductory talk. Thursday, December 9, 6:30 PM. New York Theosophical Society, 240 East 53rd Street, between Second and Third Avenues. (212) 665-9959.

The advertising deadline for Events is every Thursday. Rates: $210 for 50 words; $260 for 75 words, additional words (above 75) $2.00 each. To place an ad, call Amanda at (212) 209-5414.

GOLD IS SOARING!

Are you satisfied with 1% or 2% interest?

Gold Average Prices

Year	Gold Per Oz.
2001	$271
2005	$444
2009	$972
2010 Thru 11/12/10	$1202
Gold Price 11/12/10	$1388

We stock Pre-1933 U.S. Gold Coins ($1.00, $2.50, $3.00, $5.00, $10.00, $20.00) and major gold bullion coins and bars

Birmingham Coin & Jewelry, Inc.
33802 N. Woodward Ave.
Birmingham, Michigan 48009
(Same location 32 years)

Free literature: 248-642-1234
Please ask for **Richard or Kurtis**
(Buying or Selling, We Can Help You)

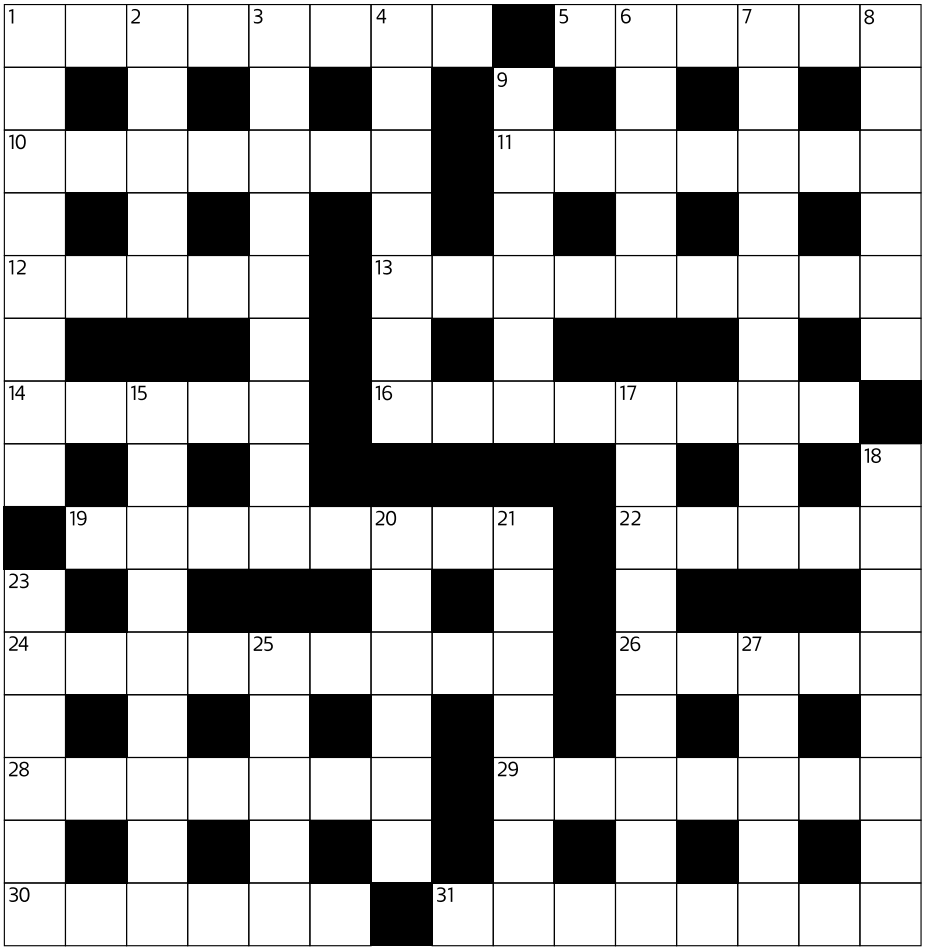
American? Jewish?
Appalled by what Israel is doing in your name?
We are too. Join us.
American Jews for a Just Peace
www.ajjp.org

Twelve Months of Cats • Quotes • Dates
2011
Wall Calendar
Cat Lovers Against the Bomb
The Dream of
Peace
$8.95 + $1.75 Postage
Order from: Cat Lovers Against the Bomb Tel: 877-778-3434
P.O. Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501 e-mail: catcal@aol.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Puzzle No. 1611

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and **5** Work with such symbolic associations might be intriguing. (5,3,6)

10 In a vacuum tube, the negative pole changes each dot this way. (7)

11 Sets down platters, so-called. (7)

12 Weak tea by the sound of it? The other way around—but just a pinch of it! (5)

13 Such time shouldn't hang heavy, though it's really the distance that is measured. (5-4)

14 Take a big look, and this will be at the heart of it for shelter. (5)

16 It might be in dressing a boy surrounded by dirt. (5,3)

19 Leaves a band on stage, when the unexpected gate is off. (8)

22 See 2 down

24 If I were in this source, you'd see the chief attendant. (9)

26 Spoke in the plural form, as it were. (5)

28 His rank is unusual, even for one regarded as a god by some. (7)

29 Where coals may be heaped for the thankless. (7)

30 Smollett's Roderick is without definite direction. (6)

31 Do they use 4 to scatter trinkets about? (8)

DOWN

1 and **23** The end of the bird goes to one of a communistic sect, perhaps employed at the bar. (8,6)

2 and **22** across One probably wouldn't employ a 1 and 23 down this way, where the circus band might be. (2,3,5)

3 Responsible for one, you might be put in a corner. (9)

4 Want the French to be associated with 31? (7)

6 Something worn by a Highlander race as well? (5)

7 In which there might be growing problems for the amateur. (9)

8 Move in desperation to a place at the seaside, perhaps. (6)

9 Certainly not an extravagant description. (6)

15 It's a sign a rainstorm will be there for the Music Man's girl. (9)

17 Certainly not left up as being absolute. (9)

18 Such as the privy? (8)

20 Not safe with nonprofessional expense. (6)

21 Perhaps found in bears, but also descriptive of certain people. (7)

25 Shrub or rub. (5)

27 This sea dog should have been a good swimmer. (5)

Frank W. Lewis
1912–2010

The Nation's cryptic crossword constructor since 1947 died peacefully November 18. There will be an obituary next week.

This puzzle originally appeared in the December 13, 1975, issue.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1610

A	R	M	C	H	A	I	R	■	C	R	I	T	I	C
G	■	A	■	A	■	N	■	B	■	E	■	E	■	A
A	N	N	O	Y	■	S	C	R	A	P	I	R	O	N
T	■	E	■	R	■	I	■	E	■	U	■	R	■	O
H	E	A	D	I	N	G	■	A	C	T	U	A	T	E
A	■	T	■	D	■	H	■	C	■	E	■	■	■	I
■	D	I	R	E	C	T	■	H	U	D	D	L	E	S
C	■	N	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	A	■	T
H	O	G	W	A	S	H	■	M	E	D	I	U	M	■
R	■	■	■	L	■	E	■	O	■	O	■	N	■	A
I	N	S	T	Y	L	E	■	D	E	L	U	D	E	D
S	■	H	■	S	■	D	■	E	■	E	■	E	■	D
T	R	A	N	S	F	E	R	S	■	F	I	R	M	A
I	■	R	■	U	■	D	■	T	■	U	■	E	■	M
E	S	K	I	M	O	■	C	O	L	L	U	D	E	S

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the second week in January, and biweekly the third week of July through the second week of September) by The Nation Company, L.P. © 2010 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, L.P., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: The Nation, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235, or call 1-800-333-8536. Publications Mail Agreement No: 40041477. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement No.: 40612608. When ordering a subscription, please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions. Basic annual subscription price: $79 for 47 issues. Back issues $6 prepaid ($8 foreign) from: The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Nation, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper.

LICENSED TO GALE/OTC
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At first and even second blush, you will think this is the famous brand "X" watch that sells for over $1,000. But this is the Rodell-7 Argonaut™ Watch, the last watch you will ever need to buy. And, incredibly, it can be yours for only ~~$129~~ $69 (or even less) – read on!*

Fairy Tales

You may have seen ads telling you of watches of which only a few were laboriously handmade by "little old watchmakers" somewhere in Germany or Switzerland or watches that will lose only one second in a million years (you should live that long!), that wars were fought over them and that recently one of them was sold for over $1 million by one of the great auction houses.

A Unique and Wonderful Watch

We won't insult your intelligence with such fantastic stories. But we will tell you one very important and sobering fact: Virtually all those fancy watches have mechanical movements. And mechanical movements have scores of tiny parts. Their wear and tear are mitigated by jeweled bearings. But that will help only for so long. Ultimately – and that sometimes may be as little as a year – these movements will wear out and that is the end of them. Because it is not possible or practical to repair them you have to throw those watches away or keep them as a reminder of your folly.

The Argonaut™ Watch is powered by the finest Japanese quartz movement. The only moving parts are the hands and the date disk. Nothing will wear out. We guarantee its proper functioning for three years. Once every two years or so, you'll need a new battery. It shouldn't cost you more than $5.

The Watch is of quality solid stainless steel construction. It is as watertight as an oyster. It is tested to 10atm, and that means that it will be water-tight to about 330 ft. It comes with a most elegant stainless steel band that is virtually indestructible.

A **Ladies Argonaut™** , same but dainty, is available at the same price. You can mix if you buy three watches.

A Great Deal

Selling the **The Argonaut™ Watch** by mail and in very large quantities and cutting profits to the proverbial bone, we have been able to reduce the price of this wonderful watch from $129 to just $69. But we have an even much better deal. Here it is:

***Buy three of these great watches and we'll sell them to you for the price of just two – for only $138. The third watch is with our compliments – absolutely FREE!** That works out to $46 per watch. Incredible, isn't it?

So don't let yourself be bamboozled by fanciful tales of watches by "little old watchmakers" and by other nonsense. Buy a watch (or watches) that will last you a lifetime and that you will in all likelihood be able to bequeath to your son or grandson in as good condition as when you bought it, a watch with an accuracy of 2 or 3 seconds per month, a watch that will never need repair, that will let you play with the mermaids and that has a no-questions-asked 3-year warranty. Forget about those $200+ mechanical watches. They are nothing but trouble. Order your quartz **Argonaut™ Watch(es)** today.

Do not get misled by similar looking "discounted" watches. There is only one Argonaut™.

A fine watch is a lifetime investment. Be sure you get what you pay for!

RODELL-7
ARGONAUT™ WATCH
From Us Only ~~$129~~ $69
(why pay more?)

* BUT READ THIS AD AND SEE HOW IT CAN BE YOURS FOR JUST $46!

Buy three Argonaut™ Watches (for the price of two) and we'll send you this splendid Faux Fabergé Egg Pendent with our compliments – absolutely FREE!

The egg measures 1-5/8" x 7/8" and comes with a 22 kt. gold-plated chain. It is adorned with 22 kt. gold-plated filigree and Swarovski crystals – about the closest thing to real diamonds!

Short on Cash?

With your credit card, you can buy three **Argonaut™ Watches** for the price of two – in two equal monthly installments. Shipping/insurance of $12.95 plus $10 for additional processing and billing will be added to the first installment.

How to Order

You may order by toll-free phone, by mail or by fax and pay by check or AmEx/Visa/MasterCard. Please give order code shown below. Add $6.95 for one, $12.95 for three watches for shipping/insurance (and sales tax for CA delivery only). You have thirty days refund and three-year warranty. We do not refund postage. For customer service or wholesale information, please call 415/356-7801.
Please give order code Z327.

jomira
division of jomira/advance
470 3rd St., #211, San Francisco, CA 94107

Order by toll-free phone: 1-800/600-2777, or (fastest!) by fax: 1-415/356-7804.
Visit our website at www.jomira.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

5 dozen Cookies in 8 festive flavors & shapes...Gingerbread, Mocha Marble, Cranberry, Triple Chocolate Chip, Peppermint Snowflakes, Chocolate, Vanilla & Snickerdoodle Stars

Order now! **dancingdeer.com/special** or **888.699.3337** use code **NATION2**

Gourmet food gifts are among the most personal and distinctive forms of holiday giving, and Dancing Deer's award-winning all-natural cookies and brownies have been delighting families, friends and associates for years with expressive, beautifully composed and elegantly packaged gifts.

Select any future arrival date. May not be combined with other offers. Not valid on Sweet Home, Cookie of the Month or Corporate orders.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED